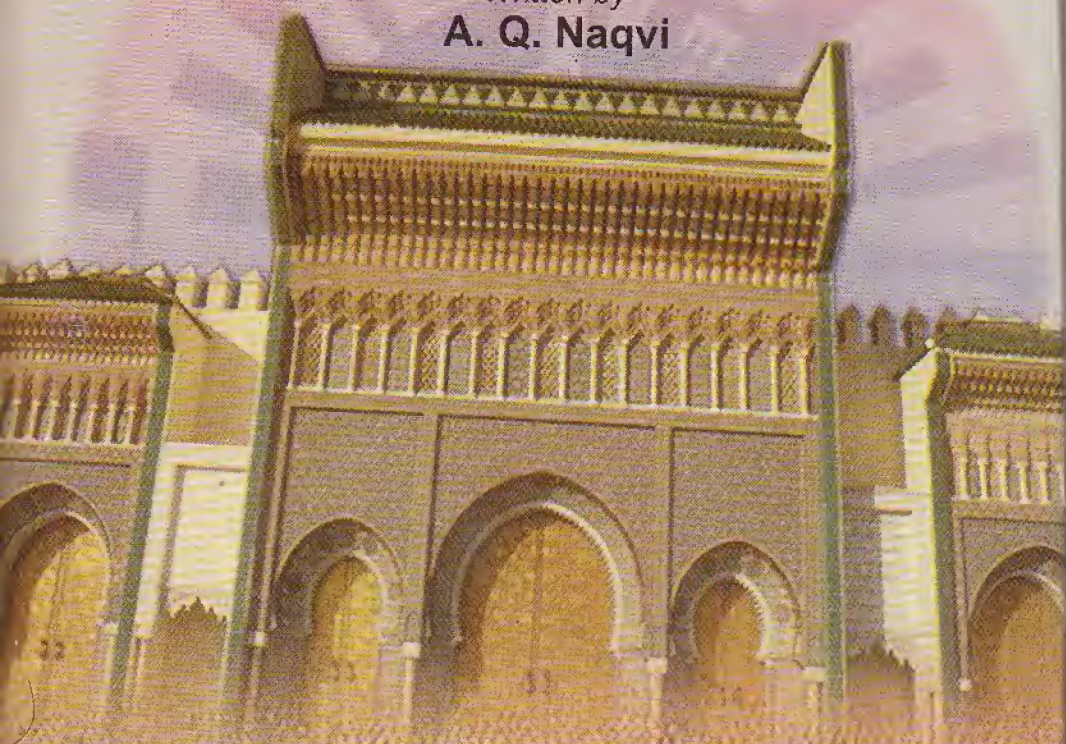


The Salafis

(History of The Ahle Hadees Movement in India)

Written by
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THE SALAFIS

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**To
My Friend**

Prof (Dr) Abdul Wadud Azhar Dehlvi

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PREFACE

The Wahabi movement was the first ever socio-religious mass movement in the Indian subcontinent during the 19th century that transformed the degenerate Muslim society into an ideal Islamic society. The Wahabis mobilised the Muslims to fight the British Colonial rule in India. History bears testimony that the Wahabis gave an extremely tough fight to the British. No doubt they lost the battle but the ultimate victory was theirs.

These golden chapters of our history deserve to be retold and recapitulated to enlighten our compatriots and the new generation on the services and sacrifices of our forefathers. But unfortunately we don't have ample literature available on the subject. Ghulam Rasul Mehr was the first scholar who compiled a comprehensive account of the Wahabi activities on the Frontiers and elsewhere in India. In English, Hunter's Book "Our Indian Musalmans" (1870) gave a detailed account of the activities of the Wahabi freedom fighters. Hunter was a representative of the British Colonialism. His book is blatantly biased against the Wahabis. However, not withstanding his clear bias against the Wahabis, he was honest enough to acknowledge the merits of the Wahabi movement. He paid tribute to the devotion and dedication of the Wahabi activists and admired the uprightness and sterling character of their leaders.

Dr. Qayamuddin's Wahhabi Movement in India is a compact and comprehensive work. These three writers gave us the source material. Mehr's work is of a specific significance. He has proved beyond doubt that the *Jihad*

was not launched against the Sikhs and the clashes between the Sikhs and the Wahabis were accidental not planned. Maharaja Ranjit Singh held Syed Ahmad in esteem and had offered him a vast territory on the bank of the Indus River. Syed Ahmad in his letter to Ranjit Singh, had sought his help in his fight against the enemy. This has changed the entire scenario, and the misconception that had gained currency, thanks to the distortion of the facts by Muhammad Jafar and Sir Syed's attempt to camouflage the anti-British activities of the Wahabis by asserting that the Wahabis had launched the Jihad to fight the Sikhs, has finally been laid to rest. Our compliments to Ghulam Rasul Mehr- a scion of the Ahlehadis community of Punjab. However, it is also an irrefutable fact that these two scholars were sincere and no ulterior motives were involved in their attempt to circumvent the facts. They simply wanted to save the Muslims, particularly the Wahabis, from the wrath of the vindictive colonial rulers. Sir Syed knew well that the Muslims had not yet recovered from the trauma of 1857 uprising. His vindication was, in fact, a desperate attempt to absolve the Muslims from the charge of rebellion against the Queen, levelled by Hunter in his book. Sir Syed was not against the Sikhs or any other community. He was not a fanatic but a liberal nationalist par excellence. Himself a Wahabi, he was aware of the fact that the Wahabis had taken up arms to fight the alien rulers but constraints and compulsions of the time had forced him to conceal the facts.

However, this book is a modest attempt to highlight the services and sacrifices of the Wahabis during the last 150 years, an era of turbulence and chaos in our national life.

Wahabis, the Ahlehadis or the Salafis are those who adhere to the pristine teachings of Islam as enshrined

in the Quran and the Hadith {Tradition or the precepts of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH)} and reject all that is not enjoined upon by the Shariah.

I am indebted to my learned friends, Shaikh Muhammad Aatur Rahman Madani, Maulana Rafiq Ahmad Salafi and Maulana Abdul Karim Salafi, who helped me in the procurement of books. But for their help, it would not have been possible for me to compile this book. Their persistent encouragement was indeed an inspiration as well as a solace, which helped me a lot to recover from the depression that had overwhelmed me after the death of my eldest son Syed Muhammad Arif Naqvi, in a road accident in 1994. I am grateful to Mr. Syed Shaukat Salim, Dr. Shakir Jamil and Dr. Safiullah Khan, who also helped me by making available some very important reference material. I am particularly thankful to my brother-in-law, the late Dr. Syed Mahfuzur Rahman, who gave me some of the valuable volumes. Unfortunately, he passed away last year. May his soul rest in peace.

Last, but not least, I would like to place on record my appreciation of the help rendered by my son Mr. Syed Abdul Hameed Junaid, in procuring some of the books needed to review and revise the manuscript of the book.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

It is very much distressing that not withstanding an enviable record of sacrifices and meritorious services in the religious, social, academic and political spheres, the Ahlehadis community still hankers for an identity and a prestigious place in the national and social life befitting to its stature. This stark reality exposes our failure in projecting the sect in the right perspective and highlighting the sacrifices and services of our forefathers who were the pioneers of our freedom movement, and launched the first armed struggle against the alien rulers and were the torchbearers of social reform and spiritual regeneration. They gave a clarion call to the Muslims to adhere to the pristine teachings of Islam as enshrined in the Quran and the Hadith. But the overwhelming majority of the people are not aware of our contribution to the national and social life of the Indian subcontinent.

They don't even know that there is a sect among the Muslims whose members had spearheaded the freedom movement and were the motivating force behind the uprising of 1857. Even a large majority of the Muslims are ignorant of the fact that Sir Syed and Abul Kalam Azad belonged to the Wahabi (Ahlehadis) community. This is for want of literature on the subject particularly in English, Hindi and other regional Indian languages. This has resulted in misinformation, which invariably leads to misgivings and mistrust. Misgivings breed alienation that in the long run degenerates into contempt and animosity. This is the situation we have been facing today.

Al-Kitab International (New Delhi) has brought out

this book to dispel the prevailing misgivings and distrust and enlighten our compatriots on this subject. It is earnestly hoped that this modest attempt of ours will go a long way in clearing the web from the minds.

Al-Kitab International is a repository of books on various Islamic subjects compiled and authored by eminent Salafi scholars and other theologians.

The Quran, exegesis, translation of the Quran in English, Urdu and Hindi, Ahadith with Urdu translation and annotations, Fatwas by renowned Ahlehadis theologians, Islamic History, textbooks, literary history, poetic collections and books for variegated taste and interest are available here.

We have a promising project to publish classical works of the Salafi scholars. We will soon embark on this mission INSHALLAH.

Syed Shaukat Saleem
Proprietor,
Al-Kitab International,
Jamia Nagar, New Delhi.

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THE SALAFIS

INTRODUCTION : Islam ushered in an era of enlightenment in the Arabian Desert. The traditions of savagery yielded to the sublime values of humanity, and within a short span of time (two decades), the uncultured tribes were transformed into a civilised society. Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him) was the spiritual as well as the temporal leader of the Ummah. Madinah was the first Islamic state and he, as the sovereign of this state, commanded his army in the battle fields, signed peace treaties, dispatched emissaries to the kings and the emperors of the neighbouring countries calling them to embrace Islam, and adjudicated upon the disputes of his people in accordance with the divine laws.

After his demise, his caliphs and the companions expanded the boundaries of the Islamic state. Muslim armies trampled the mighty empires of Persia and Rum. Egypt also fell to the Muslims and Islam rapidly spread in these ancient lands. The Central Asian states also came under the Islamic rule.

Islamic society had a comprehensive code to govern and administer their affairs, in the form of the Quran and the Ahadith (Percepts of the Messenger of Allah, (PBUH)). When Muaz bin Jahal, a prominent companion of the Messenger of Allah, (PBUH), was deputed as the governor to Yemen, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) asked him how will he resolve the disputes brought before him for adjudication? "In accordance with the commandments of the Quran" Muaz replied. "If no specific commandment was available there?" The

Messenger of Allah (PBUH), asked. "Then in the light of the percepts of the Messenger of Allah"(PBUH) (the Hadith) Muaz submitted. "In case no such guidance was forthcoming from there also?" the Messenger of Allah further asked. "Then, I will apply my own mind", Muaz said confidently. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was pleased. He appreciated his approach and invoked Allah's blessing on him. This is the dynamic spirit and pragmatic approach of Islam, which enables the Muslims to keep abreast of time. It authorizes them to sort out their problems through intellectual reasoning within the framework of the enjoins of the Quran and the Hadith (Tradition). It is called Ijtihad.

During the last Hajj pilgrimage, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) delivered his sermon from the Mount Arafat. It is popularly known as Khutba Hajjatul Wida (sermon of the last pilgrimage). It was the charter of liberty, equality and fraternity that Islam gave to the humanity at large.

Exhorting the audience, he said:

I have left behind two commandments for you, Allah's Book and my sunnah (practice). So long as you adhere to these sources you will not go astray.

(تركت فيكم امرين لن تضلوا ما تمسكتم بهما كتاب الله وسنتي)

The Quran had not yet been compiled in a volume when the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) left for his heavenly abode. It had been written on the palm leaves, camel's bones, stone slabs and was also memorized by a large number of his companions (May Allah be pleased with all of them). When in a battle a large number of the companions, who had memorized the Quran, were killed Umar bin Al Khattab was very much anguished. He was apprehensive that if all the companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) who had memorized the Quran, died or killed, the Quran will be no more. So he requested Abu

Bakr, the first enlightened caliph of Islam, to order for the compilation of the Quran into a volume. Abu Bakr was at first, reluctant to do something not enjoined upon by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), but Umar bin Al Khattab persuaded him to do it. When he was convinced, he constituted a board of some prominent companions, who had memorized the Quran, for the purpose. Zaid bin Sabit was the head of the board, as he was one of those who had collected the Quran during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). (1)

All the companions who had memorized the Quran or had it written on the palm leaves or on the camel's bones, were summoned by the board. They would recite the verses of the Quran and the scribes present there would record it. In case of variation in the recitation it was tallied with the written text as it had been recorded during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) as per his instructions. Whenever the verses of the Quran were inspired to him he would recite them and the scribes specially assigned to the job used to record the text according to his instruction. He would direct them to put a certain verse at a particular place under a particular chapter with reference to its context. Thus a compact Quranic text had been compiled during the lifetime of Allah's Messenger (PBUH). But it was in a scattered form. So Abu Bakr and Umar wanted to compile it in a volume. The Messenger of Allah's wives were also consulted in this

[عن انس رضى الله عنه جمع القرآن على عهد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم
 اربع كلهم من الانصار ابى ومعاذ بن جبل وابوزيد وزيد بن ثابت] (بخارى)

(1) Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, said the Quran was collected during the life time of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) by four persons all of whom were from the Ansar, Uhai, Muaz bin Jahal, Abu Zaid and Zaid bin Sabit.

(Bukharis, Vol. II, Hadith no. 155)

process, particularly Aisha, the most intelligent and learned amongst his consorts, was of a great help as she had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the text and the context of the Quran. An authentic text of Allah's Book was thus compiled into a volume. When Islam spread beyond the Arabian Peninsula and millions of non-Arabs came within its fold, there was a demand for the copies of the Quran. Usman, the third caliph of Islam, got the transcriptions of the Quran from the Abu Bakr's volume and the copies were dispatched to all the regions of the caliphate. The scholars prepared more copies from the official transcription as and when needed.

Hajjaj bin Yusuf, the Umayyad governor of Iraq, directed the scholars to put diacritical marks (اعراب) on the text to facilitate accurate recitation of the Quran by non-Arab readers.

The same care was taken in the matter of the Hadith. Abu Bakr whenever confronted with a situation where he could not get a clear authority from the Quran to resolve a controversy, would turn to the companions of Allah's Messenger (PBUH) to find out if they had any of his precepts to help resolve the matter. When a companion narrated a Hadith, he was asked to produce witness in support of his narration. Umar also followed this practice. Once when Abu Musa Al Ashari narrated a Hadith to him, he demanded to produce a witness and Abu Musa had to rush to the Ansars to get an authentication (1). The Ahadith were not recorded during the lifetime of Allah's Messenger (PBUH). Only the Quranic verses were recorded whenever revealed and recited by Allah's Messenger (PBUH). He did not allow his traditions to be kept in a recorded form. It was due to the apprehension that it might be intermixed with the recording of the Quran. So there was no recorded text of the Traditions.

Only the companions of Allah's Messenger (PBUH) used to narrate Ahadith to convey his precepts, as he had himself directed them to convey his Tradition even it may be a single sentence (بلغوا عني ولو آية). But at the same time he had warned against forging of a Tradition. One who fabricated a Tradition (Hadith) shall be thrown into the fire of the (من كذب على متعمداً فليتبوأ مقعده من النار) hell. So, his companions were very much scrupulous in narrating the Traditions. They would not narrate a Hadith unless they were sure that the other companions would authenticate it. Abu Hurairah, one of the prominent companions of Allah's Messenger (PBUH) frequently narrated Ahadith. People objected to his habit of narrating so many Traditions. He said, "I narrate more Ahadith

(1) [عن عبيد بن عمير ان ابو موسى استاذن على عمر رضى الله عنه فلم يؤذن له وكانه كان مشغولاً فوجع ابو موسى ففرغ، فقال الم اسمع صوت عبد الله بن قيس؟ اذنوا له قيل قد رجع، فدعاه، فقال كنا نؤمر بذلك فقال تاتينى على ذلك باعيتنه. فانطلق الى مجالس الانصار فسألهم فقالوا لا يشهد لك على هذا الا اصغرنا ابو سعيد الخدرى فذهب بابى سعيد الخدرى. فقال عمر اخضنى على هذا من امر رسول الله عليه وسلم. الهانى الصنف بالاسواق (يعنى الخروج الى التجاره، بخارى ج ٢)

(1) Narrated Ubaid bin Umair, Abu Musa asked Umar to admit him but he was not admitted, as Umar was busy. Abu Musa went back. When Umar finished his job, he said, "Did I not hear the voice of Abdullah bin Qais? Let him come in". Umar was told that he had left. So he sent for him and on his arrival he (Abu Musa) said we were ordered to do so (i.e., to leave if not admitted asking permission three) Umar told him "Bring witness in proof of your statement". Abu Musa went to Ansari's meeting place and asked them. They said none among them would give this witness except Abu Sayeed Al Khudri (then youngest amongst us). Abu Musa then took Abu Sayeed Al Khudri to Umar, and Umar said, "Had this order of Allah's Apostle (PBUH) been hidden from me. (Then he added), I had been in trading in markets". (Tr-Dr. Muhammad Mohsin Khan)

because I had the privilege to be more in his service. When people dispersed to attend to their business or household affairs, at that time I was always on his waiting soliciting his benign enlightenment to my queries" (1).

It was Umar bin Abdul Aziz (99-101 A H), the Umayyad caliph and an erudite scholar of Hadith, who ordered that the Traditions be recorded and compiled in volumes. He was the great grandson of Umar bin Alkhattab, the second enlightened Caliph of Islam, and for his piety and righteousness, he is counted as the (fifth) enlightened caliph of Islam.

(1) [حدثنا ابو ايمان قال حدثنا شعيب عن الزهري اخبرني سعيد بن المسيب و ابي سلمه عن عبد الرحمن ان ابو هريره قال الكم تقولون ان ابا هريره يكثر حديث عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وتقولون ما بال المهاجرين والانصار لا يحدثون عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بمثل حديث ابي هريره؟ ان اخواني من المهاجرين كان يشغلهم الصنف بالاسواق وكنت الزم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على ملأ بطني فاشهد اذ غابوا او حفظ اذ تسوا وكان يشغل اخواني من الانصار عمل اموالهم وكنت امرأ مسكيناً من مساكين الصنف اعنى حين مكثون وقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في حديث يحدثه انه من يتسبط احد ثوبه حتى اقضى مقالتي هذه ثم يجمع اليه ثوبه الا وعى ما اقول فيسلطه نرة على حتى اذا قضى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مقالته جمعتها الى صدرى فما نسيت من مقاله. رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم تلك من شيء] (بخارى كتاب البيوع ج ٣)

(1) Narrated Abu Hurairah, "you people say that Abu Hurairah tells many narrations from Allah's Apostle (PBUH) and you also wonder why the emigrants and Ansars don't narrate from Allah's Apostle (PBUH) as Abu Hurairah does. My emigrant brothers were busy in the market while I used to stick to Allah's Apostle (PBUH) content with what fills my stomach; so I used to be present if they were absent and I used to remember if they forgot and my Ansari brothers used to be busy with their properties and I was one of the poor men of Suffah. I used to remember the narrations if they forgot. No doubt Allah's Messenger (PBUH) once said; whoever spread his garment till I have finished my present speech and then gathers it to him, will

When he noticed that with the passing away of the companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), the knowledge of the Hadith (the second original source of Islamic Shariah) was fading fast, he was apprehensive that if immediate steps were not taken to preserve this discipline, the posterity might not be able to learn it. So he issued orders to his governors to take steps to record the Ahadith from the companions of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). He issued specific instructions that only the Ahadith directly reported from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) be recorded. These collections of authentic Traditions were dispatched to all the regions of the Islamic caliphate.

During the early centuries of Islam, Muslim divines gave lessons in the Quran and the Hadith. They were called the Imam or the Muhaddisin (scholars of Hadith). They delivered lectures on the Quranic subjects explained the context of revelation, defined the esoteric meanings of the verses and quoted Ahadith in support of their interpretation. The life and the character of Allah's

remember whatever I will say. So I spread my coloured garment which I was wearing till Allah's Messenger (PBUH) had finished his saying, then I gathered it to my chest. So I did not forget any of his narration".

In another narration he further said, "By Allah but for the two verses in Allah's book, I would never have related any narration from Allah's Messenger (PBUH). These are "those who hide the proof and guidance which we revealed after we had made it clear in the scripture, such are accursed of Allah and accursed of those who have the power to curse. Except such of them who repent and amend and make manifest (the truth). These are towards them I relent. I am the relenting, the Merciful."

(2-159-60, Bukhari, vol III, p 540)
(Tr- Dr. Muhammad Mohsin Khan)

Messenger (PBUH), his way of preaching, his style of governance, his expeditions and defence strategies, his love and compassion for the poor and down trodden, his relations with his companions, his domestic life, all were the subject matter of their study.

The Muhaddisin evolved an exhaustive system of collecting and critically examining the Traditions. The character, piety, veracity, memory and integrity of every narrator were the matters of scrutiny. If a narrator was of a weak memory or had ever been charged with falsehood, his reporting was rejected, unless otherwise supported by a competent and trustworthy narrator who had reported the same Hadith from other authentic sources.

This strict criterion of scrutiny and critical examination of the competence of the narrators resulted in weeding out a large number of Traditions which were either reported by a person who did not stand the test of credibility or had been charged with forging of the Traditions. Imam Bukhari compiled his Sahi Bukhari, selecting a few thousand of Ahadith out of his collection of about half a million narrations. His collection is called the most authentic book after the Book of Allah (The Quran). (اصح الكتب بعد كتاب الله) Muslim, Nasai, Tirmizi, Abu Daud, Ibn-e-Maja are the other collections of Hadith. These are called Saha Sitta (the six authentic collections of Ahadith).

With the expansion of the Islamic empire and the mass conversion to Islam, new socio-religious problem surfaced. People turned to the scholars to know the solution of their problems in the light of Islamic teachings. The scholars answered their queries quoting verses from the Quran and the precepts of Allah's Messenger (PBUH). However, in the cases where no clear Commandment from

the Quran and the Hadith was available, they had to apply their own mind to arrive at a conclusion to sort out the problem on the analogy of a Divine Commandment and the Hadith. These logical reasonings led to the formation of the Islamic jurisprudence (فقہ اسلامی)

Gradually four distinct schools of jurisprudence emerged, all were named after their exponents; i.e. Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafaie, Imam Hambal and Imam Malik. These were erudite scholars of their time. For about three centuries, Muslim Ummah was not divided into the sectarian camps of jurisprudence. The Muslims adhered to the Quran and the Hadith. They did not follow any particular Imam (jurist) but adopted the opinion of any one of them who could offer the solution to their problems. There were the scholars who were competent enough to derive inference from the Quran and the Hadith according to their own wisdom. But with the passage of time, a distinct trend of following a particular school of jurisprudence developed. The rulers often, under the influence of their court scholars, followed a sectarian jurisprudence, which gave them licence to their debauchery. An outstanding scholar of a particular school of jurisprudence, gave a free licence to a licentious Abbaside caliph and got huge fortune in reward. The Qazis (judges) appointed by the rulers decided the cases according to the opinion of their mentors (jurists). This royal patronage gave popularity to a sectarian jurisprudence and in a way it was the state religion. However, a new ruler would follow any other school of jurisprudence of his own choice. An under-current of struggle for supremacy among these sectarian scholars was always going on in the royal court. Despite this sectarian division, there had always been the scholars who adhered to the enjoins of the Quran and the Hadith. They were known as Ahl-e-Hadith (adherents of Hadith) as against

the sectarian scholars who were called Ahlur-Rai (followers of the opinion or conjecture of their Imams).

There were rulers who adhered to the pristine teachings of Islam and ensured that the enjoins of the Quran and Hadith were followed in their domains (1). With the intermingling of people and the races, a new composite culture emerged in the Muslim world. Jewish and the Christian scholars from Syria and Egypt introduced Greek philosophy to the Arabs. Books on philosophy, logic, mathematics and medicine were translated into Arabic. These scholars were patronised by royal courts. This ushered in an era of liberal thinking among the Muslim intelligentsia. Muslim scholars were overwhelmed by the philosophical theories of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Galen and other ancient Greek philosophers. They were so much engrossed in the

(1) In Spain, the code based on the Quran and the Hadith was enforced. Among the kings, Yusuf Bin Abdul Maumin and Yaqub Bin Yusuf fervently supported it.

In the Tarikh-e-Islam Hafiz Shamsuddin Zahabi writes "Abu Bakr bin Jadana said that when I first went to Amirul Maummin Yusuf, I saw that there was a book of jurisprudence before him. He said to me, "look at this book, how many opinions they have recorded, for every proposition there are four to five opinions. God knows which one is correct and which one should a follower adopt". I wanted to express my views but the king interrupted me and pointing to the Quran and the volume of Abu-Daud (collection of Ahadith) and the sword, which was placed close to him, said, "there is nothing except these three".

Commenting on the reign of Khalifa Yaqub bin Yusuf bin Abdul Maumin (1545-1595 A.D.), the author in the same book, says; "During his reign the sectarian jurisprudence had lost its value. The jurists were afraid of him. He had issued orders that Ahadith be segregated from the books on religion and the

philosophical and logical reasoning that their intellect had become a captive of the Greek thoughts. They suffered from an inferiority complex and tried to test the Islamic ideologies on the logical principles, while the other scholars defended the tenets of their religion by means of logical reasoning. Rationalism اعتزال and scholasticism (علم كلام) became the distinct schools of thought. But rationalism opened the floodgates of mental vagary. The stupefied minds under the spell of Greek philosophy made Islam the target of their intellectual acrobatics. Even Allah's attributes were subjected to logical testing. A diabolical debate concerning the Quran rocked the minds of the scholars. The rationalists propounded the theory of the Quran 'being a creation. It was nothing but intellectual prostitution. It had taken the entire Islamic world in its

remaining material be burnt. He discouraged discussion and deliberation on sectarian jurisprudence and had directed the scholars of Hadith to procure books on Hadith and Asmaur Rijal (information about the narrators of the Ahadith). So all the volumes of sitta and other volumes of authentic Hadith were collected. The Khalifa himself taught Hadith. The students turned up in large number. Those who memorized Ahadith were rewarded lavishly and robe of honour (Khilat) was also given to them. It was why that most of the Spanish ulema (Theologians) were Ahle Hadith. Imam Ibn-e-Hazm and Imam Qurtabi also hailed from that region. Code based on the Hadith was enforced there just as the code based on the sectarian jurisprudence was followed in Egypt and Iraq. Ilen-e-Khalkan (610-681 A.H.) writes that Khalifa Yaqub had ordered the Qazis (judges) not to follow a sectarian jurisprudence. The Qazis decided the cases in accordance with the enjoins of the Quran and the Hadith. They didn't follow any jurist of the past but relied upon their own wisdom and inference in the light of the Quran and the Hadith (Ijtihad) and the consensus (اجماع).

Al Hayat bad-Al Mamat (Biography of Syed Nazir Hussain Mohaddis, p 289-90.)

grip. The rationalists had their sway in the Abbasides court. Ahmad bin Daud was a malevolent person and wanted to humiliate the scholars who did not see eye to eye with him. Mamun, the Caliph, was under his influence. The wily scholar seduced him to order all the prominent scholars to endorse the theory of the rationalists concerning the Quran (1). This abuse of imperial authority wreaked havoc upon the pious theologians. Imam Ahmed bin Hambal (780-855 A.C. / 164-241A.H.) one of the greatest theologians Islamic world ever produced, was summoned to the royal court and was ordered to acquiesce in what the rationalists had propounded about the Quran. The Imam asked for an authority from the Quran and the Hadith. The rationalist had to cut a sorry figure. But they argued that since the caliph also held the same views, so Imam's opposition to the theory would tantamount to be an affront to the chief of the faithful. The rationalists, in this way, succeeded in their attempt to instigate the myopic and ill-tempered despot. He ordered that Ahmad (the Imam) be coerced to fall in line. He was subjected to physical torture and flogging. But so great was his

(1) Commenting on the Greek philosophy and the Quranic approach vis-à-vis the world and its various manifestations, Iqbal writes:

A careful study of the Quran and the various schools of scholastic theology that arose under the inspiration of Greek thoughts, discloses the remarkable fact that while Greek philosophy very much broadened the outlook of the Muslim thinkers, it on the whole obscured their vision of the Quran. Socrates concentrated his attention on the human world alone. To him the proper study of man was man and not the world of plants, insects and stars. How unlike the spirit of the Quran, which sees the humble bee recipient of Divine inspiration and constantly calls upon the readers to observe the perpetual change of the winds, the alteration of the day and night, the clouds, the starry heavens and the planets swimming through

steadfastness that the third degree torture failed to waver his belief. He was firm like a rock. His only argument was, "produce an authority from the Quran and the Hadith". When he refused to submit to the imperial arrogance, he was thrown in to the prison. There also he was the target of all sorts of brutalities, but nothing could make him deviate from the right path. He passed through the ordeal with resolution and perseverance and kindled the lamp of conviction for the posterity. He stands like a beacon of light in the dark surroundings of persecution and repression through the ages.

Caliph Mamun died leaving him in chains and fetters. His successors Motasim and then Wasiq also continued to follow the policy of persecution. The Imam had to undergo more and more torment and torture. Those mighty emperors had no compunction for victimising an innocent individual and the greatest Muslim scholars of his times.

The two tyrant Abbasides Caliphs also died within a short span of time. Imam Ahmad bin Hambal was still undergoing torment in the prison. In spite of all the brutalities he had undergone, he was unwavering.

infinite space. As a true disciple of Socrates, Plato despised sense of perception, which in his view yielded mere opinion and no real knowledge. How unlike the Quran which regards hearing and sight as the most valuable divine gifts and declares them to be accountable to God for their activities in this world. This is what the earlier Muslim students of the Quran completely missed under the spell of classical speculation. They read the Quran in the light of Greek philosophy.

Iqbal (The Reconstruction of Islamic Thoughts in Islam, p 3-4)

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Naqvi also condemns the mental aberration of the Muslim thinkers. He writes, "from the

Physically he was shattered but his soul was as fresh and vibrant as ever. With broken limbs and a bleeding body, he regularly offered his prayers. One of the noblest son of Islam, so unique was his sense of piety that he never cursed those at whose hands he had so badly suffered. He always invoked Allah's blessings and implored His forgiveness for the Abbasides. Once his son Abdullah asked him why did he always invoke Allah's mercy upon tyrant Abbasides rulers. The Imam told him that the Abbasides were the cousins of the Messenger of the Allah (PBUH) [they were the descendents of Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, brother of Abdullah, father of Allah's Messenger (PBUH)] and he did not like to curse the relatives of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). The most striking point of this trauma is that the three mighty and tyrant Abbasides rulers who persistently made him the target of torture and torment for his belief in the pristine teachings of Islam, died one after the other within a short period, but Imam Ahmad bin Hambal, whose death they had been aspiring, survived long after their death. This was the spirit of his conviction that did not let him perish. His faith in the

material sciences the Muslim thinkers drifted towards the metaphysics and the theology of the Greeks, which was in fact a revised version of their mythology. The Greeks had ingeniously imparted a scholastic look to their mythology by dressing it up in a philosophical phraseology. Their philosophy was purely speculative. The spirit of Quran on the other hand is anti-classical. The Muslims as a matter of fact, had no need to enter theoretical disputation regarding the Being and the Attributes of God after the complete knowledge of the Quran had been placed in their hands. But they did not appreciate its worth and instead of concentrating on solid spiritual and material welfare, which would have paved the way for the universal expansion of Islam, they frittered away their energies in profitless metaphysical discussions".

(Islam and the West p-95)

Quran and the Hadith, his belief that only the commandments of Allah and the percepts of His noble Messenger (PBUH) were to be followed, gave him the strength and forbearance. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) has said that upholding the Truth in the face of a tyrant ruler is the supreme *jihad*.

(افضل الجهاد كلمة الحق عند سلطان جائر) Imam Ahmad performed the supreme *jihad*.

The succession of Jafar Al-Mutawakkil to the Abbasides throne was a turning point in the annals of the dynasty. He was a righteous and just ruler. He rejected all the absurdities propounded by the rationalists. He adhered to the pristine teaching of the Quran and the Hadith. With his ascendancy the rationalists lost their sway in the royal court. Imam Ahmad bin Hambal was released from the prison. The caliph held him in extreme reverence and wanted to expatiate for the past brutalities the Imam had to suffer. But he (the Imam) was beyond the reach of all attractions and allurements. Just as the torment and torture of Mamun and his two successors had failed to waver his courage and faith, the imperial favours and generousities extended by Al-Mutawakkil also failed to fascinate him. He politely but firmly declined all the offers and overtures from the royal palace. Once the caliph sent one-lakh dirhams to him, he refused to accept it. The royal emissary requested him to allow his son Abdullah to accept the royal donation. Imam Ahmad refused to oblige him. Abdullah also refused to accept it. The emissary, in the last, suggested that the Imam may disburse the money to the poor. The Imam said that the poor and the destitute throng at the gates of the royal palace.

Imam Ahmad had no regular source of income. He cultivated on a plot of land in his house. The harvest could hardly suffice for his subsistence but he did not care for

more and spent his time in the pursuit of knowledge. Thousands of the students converged to attend his discourses on the Hadith.

Fall of Baghdad:

Mongol invasion of Baghdad, in 1258 AC, was a devastating blow to the Muslim world. The Muslims witnessed unprecedented carnage. Baghdad the capital of the Abbasides caliphate was the most beautiful, prosperous and populous city of its time. The savage Mongols massacred the population and set the city ablaze. The grand imperial library of Baghdad was a unique repository of knowledge. Thousands of invaluable volumes on Islamic sciences, philosophy, medicine, astronomy and other disciplines, collected over the centuries were the prized assets of the Islamic world. Holagu's soldiers burnt this library, when the residents of Baghdad were massacred and their bodies were thrown into the river Tigris, the water of the river was sanguine with the blood of martyrs. When ashes of burnt volumes of the imperial library were dumped in the river, the water turned dark for many days. The carnage and vandalism in Baghdad still haunts the memory of the Muslims (1).

* The Muslims of that time had lost courage and the heart to defend themselves against the savagery of the

(1)...Holagus Mongol blood was up at this. In a rage he marched on Baghdad and after forty days siege he took it. That was end of the city of Arabian nights and all the treasures that had been accumulated during 500 years of empire. The Caliph and his sons and his near relatives were put to death. There was a general massacre for weeks till the river Tigris was dyed red with blood for miles. It is said that a million and a half people perished. All the artistic and literary treasures and libraries were destroyed. Baghdad was utterly ruined. Even the ancient

invaders. A mortal sense of terror and despondency had overtaken them. They believed that it was the Wrath of Almighty, there was no escape from it and all had to resign, to what was predestined. This passivity had paralysed all their faculties. A story goes that a Tatar soldier arrested a Muslim and dashed him to the ground to kill him. But he found that he had left his dagger at the camp. So he ordered the Muslim to stay in the same position till he returns with the dagger. The soldier went away but the Muslim had no courage to get up and escape. After quite sometime the soldier came back and butchered the dispirited Muslim.

The loss of courage and impulse to defend and retaliate, made the Muslims introverts. They turned to the mystics (Sufis). Mysticism preached seclusion and detachment from the tumult of worldly life. Mortification, self-abnegation, abstinence and mendicancy were the main teachings of mysticism. Their monasteries were the centers for meditation, introspection and to be in communion with their mentors. For a defeated and demoralized people these teachings had a great appeal and there was a mass retreat to the mystic fold. Sacerdotalism was now the fast emerging cult among the Muslims.

It was the second turning point in the Islamic history. Greek philosophy had brought intellectual

irrigation system of west Asia, thousand of years old was destroyed by Holagu.

Jawaharlal Nehru (Glimpses of World History, p-222)

The eruption of the Mongols upon the Saracen world was not like the invasion of Roman Empire by northern barbarians. These had proceeded slowly and in their comparatively gradual progress towards the heart of the empire, they had become

bewilderment; mysticism led the Ummah to seclusion and self-abnegation.

This was the time when Shaikhul Islam Taqi-uddin Ibn-e-Taimiyah of Harran, 1263 – 1328 A.D. (661 – 726 A.H.), rose from Damascus. He was a great revolutionary theologian, a man of pragmatic approach. He saw the Muslims in the grip of a fear psychosis. The scholars, the mystics and the masses all had lost their spiritual moorings and had been groping in the dark. Philosophy and mysticism had severed their link with the pristine teachings of Islam. Ibn-e-Taimiyah held the theologians and the Sufis responsible for the plight of the masses. He bitterly criticized them and condemned their escapist approach to the problems faced by common men. He called upon the Muslim masses to adhere to the pristine teachings of the religion and reject all that was not enjoined by the Quran and the Hadith. His clarion call echoed everywhere in the Muslim world.

People flocked around him. They saw a ray of hope in his call to regain their lost glory. He infused a new life in their hearts. Syria was the target of Tatar invasion. Ibn-e-Taimiyah persuaded the Sultan of Egypt to defend Syria which was his protectorate. The Sultan was reluctant to leave Egypt but Ibn-e-Taimiyah's fervent arguments, emotional appeals and valiant posture encouraged the monarch to march to Damascus. Ibn-e-Taimiyah himself led the Syrians to the battlefield. They inflicted a crushing

partially softened, and had to some extent cast off their pristine ferocity. The case was otherwise with the hords of devastator Changiz. They swept like overwhelming torrents over western Asia. Wherever they went they left misery and devastation. Their barbarous campaign and their savage slaughter put an end for a time to the intellectual development of Asia.

Syed Amir Ali (The Spirit of Islam, p-382)

defeat upon the Tatars invaders and they dared not attack again. Ibn-e-Taimiyah, the victorious commander of the Muslims, re-embarked upon his mission of reform and regeneration of the Muslim society. His scathing attack against the degenerate social system and the feudalistic hold of the so-called divines over the masses, awakened the Muslims at large. On the other hand, the adherents of the traditional system of priesthood and the theologians joined hands to oppose his mission. They clamoured and incited the ruler to chastise him for condemning the theological and mystical orders. They charged him with heterodoxy and being a maverick. His *fatwas* on divorce and visit to the tombs, were produced as a proof. He was imprisoned. This, however, did not deter him from his radical mission. He continued to pen his thought provoking views even in the prison cell. His writings, from the prison, attracted the masses all the more. The obscurantists were agitated and prevailed upon the ruler to prohibit the incarcerated scholar from writing and circulating his ideas. Pen and papers were taken away from him. He was shocked and remarked in utter despair that they had now really imprisoned him. But even after the new measures of persecution, he could not be fully silenced. He now used the prison walls as paper and gave vent to his views with a piece of charcoal.

The great revolutionary scholar, who had led his people to victory against a savage enemy and championed the cause of the masses, breathed his last in the dungeon. Ibn-e-Al Qaiyum, his illustrious student who had also been imprisoned with his master, was by his bedside. The news of the Imam's demise sent shock waves through out the Islamic world. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims converged to attend his funerals. An eminent scholar of the capital remarked that Damascus had never witnessed in its history, such a grand funeral.

Ibn-Taimiyah's death was a great loss to the Muslim Ummah. After him, Islamic world has not produced a versatile genius of his stature. Ibn-e-Al Qaiyem was the torch-bearer of the legacy of his great teacher. He also had to pass through the ordeal like his preceptor. But like the Imam, he was also an embodiment of perseverance, and continued to disseminate the message of his mentor.

The great revolutionary teacher, preacher, reformer and warrior passed away but his message of reform and regeneration kindled an ever-lasting light of social and spiritual guidance. In most of the regions of the Islamic world his message echoed even after many centuries. The great Wahabi movement of Najd was inspired by his teachings. Shaikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab was a spiritual disciple of Ibn-e-Taimiyah. In India Abul Kalam Azad was the torch bearer of this ideology.

The above instances of the two greatest sons of Islamic Ummah, have been quoted here to show that the Muslims have also had contributed their share to the intellectual persecution.

The Arab Spain:

Spain was the first territory in Europe, which came under Muslim control. It was the famous commander Tariq bin Zayad who crossed the straits and stepped on the Spanish soil in 711AC. He burnt all the boats in which the Arabs had sailed to Spain, and then delivered a heart-warming sermon. Telling his soldiers that they had only two options, fight to victory or perish. All the boats had been burnt and there was no way to retreat and sail back to safety. He exhorted them to fight valiantly and glorify the name of Allah in this land.

Realising their vulnerability the Arab army fought desperately. The Spanish forces were defeated and the Arabs hoisted the Islamic flag in Spain.

When the Umayyedes were over thrown by the Abbasides in 750 A.C. and all the members of the royal family were slain, one of the scions of the unfortunate ruling dynasty managed to escape to North Africa. With the help of his faithful tribals he crossed to Spain. Defeating the regional chieftains he established his rule there (1). Medieval Europe was a dark continent. An era of enlightenment dawned there with the arrival of the Arabs. Soon the Arab Spain became the beacon of light in that dark land (2).

The Universities of Cordova and Grenada were the great seats of learning attracting Christian students from

(1) Spain was conquered rapidly and the Arabs then poured into Southern France. Europe was being attacked by the Arabs from two sides directly at Constantinople and in France via Africa. But still these Arabs in France frightened the people of Western Europe and a great coalition was formed to fight them. Charles Martel was the leader of this coalition and in 732 A.C., he defeated them at the Battle of Tours in France. This defeat saved the Europe from the Arabs. On the plain of Tours, a historian has said, 'the Arabs lost the empire of the world when almost in their grasp'. There can be no doubt that if the Arabs had won at Tours, European history would have been tremendously changed. There was no one else to stop them in Europe and they could have marched right across to Constantinople and put an end to the Eastern Roman Empire and the other states on the way. Instead of Christianity, Islam would have been the religion of Europe and all manners of other changes might have taken place.

Jawaharlal Nehru (Glimpses of World History, p-146)

(2) Bringing out a comparison between Muslim world and the

the remote European regions. The Arab scholars gave new life to the old sciences and modernized them by supplementing new theories. They particularly concentrated upon medicine and surgery and developed it to such an extent that modern medical system basically relies upon the medieval Arab physician's works.

Christian Europe knew nothing about pathology and pharmacology. Exorcism was the popular system of treatment. Horrifying methods of surgery were applied which invariably resulted in the painful death of the unfortunate patients. Arab Muslims in Spain gave a scientific system of medicine and surgery to Europe. The

Christian Europe during the medieval period, Syed Amir Ali in his remarkable work, "The Spirit of Islam", writes, 'Under the inspiring influence of the great Prophet (PBUH), who gave them a code and a nationality and assisted by their sovereigns, the Saracens (Arab Muslims) caught up the lesson of wisdom from the East and West, combined them with the teachings of the Master (PBUH) and started from the soldiers into scholars. Under the Umayyedes we see the Muslims passing through the period of probation, preparing themselves for the great task they were called upon to undertake. Under the Ahbasides we find them the repositories of the knowledge of the world. Every part of the globe is ransacked by the agents of the Caliph for the hoarded wealth of the antiquity; these are brought to the capital and laid before an admiring and appreciating public. Schools and academies spring up in every direction, public libraries are established in every city free to every comer. The great philosophers of the ancient world are studied side by side with the Koran. Galen, Dios Corides, Themistius, Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, Ptolemy and Appolonius receive their due meed of appreciation... Traveling in search of knowledge according to the percepts of the Master (PBUH) was a pious duty.

From every part of the globe, students and scholars flocked to Cordova, to Baghdad and to Cairo to listen to the

books translated and compiled by the Arab scholars and physicians, were later translated into Latin and this introduced modern medical sciences to Europe. Ibn-e- Sina (Avicenna), Razi and Ibn-e- Baitar are as important in the modern medicine as Galen and Hippocrates. Western scholars acknowledge the contribution of the Arab physicians and the indebtedness of Europe to the Arab Spain. Not only in medical sciences and surgery but almost in all the other fields of science and knowledge, the Arabs have left their indelible bright imprints, particularly in

words of the Saracen sages. Even Christians from the remote corners of the Europe attended Muslim colleges. Men who became, in after life, the head of Christian church acquired their scholarship from Islamic teachers, such as Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II who studied in Cordova. (p-371)

What was the condition of learning in science in Christendom at the epoch? Under Constantine and his orthodox successors, the Aesclepiens (Hospital) were closed for ever, the public libraries established by the liberality of the Pagan emperors were dispersed or destroyed, learning was branded as magic or punished as treason, philosophy and science were exterminated. The ecclesiastical hatred against human learning had found expression in the patristic maxim "Ignorance is the mother of devotion, and Pope Gregory, the great, the founder of the ecclesiastical supremacy gave effect to this obscurantist dogma by expelling from Rome all the scientific studies and burning the Palatine library founded by Augustus Caesar. He forbade the study of ancient writers of Greece and Rome. He introduced and sanctified the mythological Christianity, which continued for centuries the predominating creed of Europe with its worship of the relics and remains of saints. Orthodox Christianity put Science and literature under the ban, and they succeeded in emancipating themselves only when free thoughts had broke down the barriers raised by the orthodoxy against the progress of the human mind. (p 372-373)

chemistry, physics, astronomy, geography, mathematics, algebra, architecture, history, culture, poetry, rhetoric, philosophy and scholasticism. (1) They introduced Hindsa (Arabic numerals); they had got from India, to the Christian Europe. The Arab Spain was the most prosperous and developed region of Europe. The Christian travellers returning from their journey told fascinating stories of the affluence prosperity and luxurious life of the moors. People were so much overwhelmed by the progress and prosperity of the Muslims that it was an Eldorado for

(1) Enumerating the achievements of the Arabs in various fields of science and learning, Syed Amir Ali writes in his "The Spirit of Islam":

The Greeks are said to have invented Algebra, but among them as Oelsner has justly remarked it was confined to furnishing amusement for the plays of the goblet. The Muslims applied it to the higher purposes and thus gave it a value hitherto unknown...Not only Algebra, geometry and arithmetic but optics and mechanics made remarkable progress in the hands of the Moslems. They invented spherical trigonometry; they were the first to apply Algebra to geography, to introduce the tangent and to substitute the sine for the arc in the trigonometrical calculations. Their progress in the mathematical geography was no less remarkable. The works of Ibn Haukal, of Makrezi, Al Istakhri, Masudi, Al Bairuni, Al Kumi and Al Idrisi, Kazwini, Ibnul wardi and Abul Fida show what the Saracens attained in the department of science, called by them Rasm-ul-Arz. At a time when Europe firmly believed in the flatness of the earth and was ready to burn any foolhardy person who thought otherwise, the Arabs taught geography by globe. Chemistry as a science is unquestionably the invention of the Muslims. Abu Musa Jabir (the Gebir of the Christian writers) is the true father of the Modern Chemistry. His name is memorable in chemistry, since it marks an epoch in that science of equal importance to that of Priestley and Lavoisier.

The science of medicine and the art of surgery, the best

most of them (1). The Christian masses groping in the darkness of illiteracy, backwardness, poverty and above all their persecution by the church, were attracted towards the Muslims. Islam had emerged as a shining star on the dark

index to a nation's genius and a severe test to the intellectual spirit of a faith, were developed to the highest degree.

Medicine had undoubtedly attained a higher degree of excellence among the Greeks but the Arabs carried it far beyond the stage in which their predecessors in the work of civilisation, had left it and brought it close to the modern standard. The study of medical substances, the idea of which struck Dioscorides in the Alexandrian School, is in its scientific form, a creation of the Arabs. They invented chemical pharmacy and were the first founders of those institutions, which are now called Dar-ush-Shifa, the house of cure or Maristan (an abbreviation of Bimaristan, the Patients House) and maintained them at the expenses of the state.

The names of the Arab physicians in the biographical dictionary of Abu Usaiba fill a volume. Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Zakaria Al Razi known to medieval Europe as Rhazes, who flourished in the beginning of the tenth century, Ali ibn Abbas, Avicenna (Ali Abu Hasan ibn Sina), Abu Casis (Abul Kasim Khalaf ibn Abbas) Aven Zoar (Abu Marwan ibn Abdul Malik ibn Zuhr), Averroes Abul Wahid Muhammad ibn Rushd and Aben Bethar (Abdullah bin Ahmad ibn Ali Al Beithar) veterinary are some of the most brilliant and most distinguished physicians who have left an enduring impression on the world of thought. Albucasis was not only a physician but also a surgeon of the first rank. He performed some of the most difficult surgical operations in his own and obstetrical department. The ample description he has left of the surgical instruments employed in his time, gives an idea of the development in surgery among the Arabs. (p 385-86)

(1) In his 'Glimpses of World History', Jawaharlal

horizon of medieval Europe. The liberal approach of Islam, as against the repressive authority of the church, was agitating their minds. Islam had become the symbol of enlightenment progress and prosperity. Some of the Christian monarchs openly demonstrated their

Nehru writes, "The 700 years of Arab rule in parts of Spain are surprising enough. But what is more interesting is the high civilisation and culture of the Spanish Arabs or Moors, as they are called. A historian carried away by his enthusiasm a little, has said that 'the Moors organized that wonderful kingdom of Cordova which was the marvel of the middle ages and which, when all Europe was plunged in barbaric ignorance and strife, alone held the torch of learning and civilisation bright and shining before the western world.'"

Jawaharlal gives fascinating detail of the progress and prosperity of Kurtuba. He says, "Kurtuba was the capital of this kingdom for just 500 years. This was a great city of a million inhabitants, a garden city ten miles in length with twenty-four miles of suburb. There were said to have been 60,000 palaces and mansions, 2,00,000 small houses, 80,000 shops, 3,800 mosques and 700 public baths. There were many libraries, the chief of these, the Imperial Library of the Emir, containing 4,00,000 books. The University of Cordova was famous all over Europe and even in Western Asia. Free elementary schools for the poor abounded. A historian says that, "In Spain almost everybody knew how to read and write while in Christian Europe, save and except the clergy even persons belonging to the highest ranks were wholly ignorant". Such was the city of Cordova competing with the other great Arab city of Baghdad. Its fame spread all over Europe and a German writer of the tenth century called it 'the ornament of the world'. To its university came students from distant places. The influence of Arab philosophy spread to the other universities of Europe, Paris and the other universities of northern Italy. Averroes or Ibn Rushd was a famous philosopher of Cordova in the twelfth century. In his later years, he fell out with the Spanish Emir and was banished. He went and settled in Paris. (p 189-90)

favour to Islam. This growing influence of Islam was a cause of serious concern to the clergies. The church saw its predation in such pro-Islamic trend among the Christians. They were determined to block the advancement of Islam in Europe.

It was Peter, the venerable, the archbishop of Cluny, who travelled to Spain in 1142 A.C. he saw the prosperity and progress the Spanish Arab enjoyed. He observed every thing minutely but with a prejudiced mind, and collected material to translate the Quran in Latin. He

A Spanish writer Vincent Blasco Ibanez writes, "In Spain regeneration came not from the north with the barbarian hordes, it came from the south, with the Arab conquerors. It was a civilising expedition more than a conquest. With it came to us that young robust alert culture, which made astonishingly rapid progress and triumphed so soon after its birth.

It was the orient penetrating into Europe... from the eighth to fifteenth century, there developed the finest and the richest civilization of medieval Europe (Nation and the World, April 1, 1992). Cordova was the only country in the west where geometry, astronomy, chemistry and medicines were cultivated. [French writer, Dederot 'd Alembert (Nation and the World)]

Within half a century after Tariq's conquest came the independence or Umayyad Amirate, which was established by the great prince Abdul Rahman (Al Dakhil or the new comer) who ruled from 756 to 788 A.D. He set up his own regime in Cordova on the Guadalquivir or 'Al Wadi Alkabar' or Great River in Arabic. His thirty-two years reign was one of the real period of prosperity that a united Spain has ever enjoyed in all her history. Abdur Rahman I, the new-comer or Al Dakhil built the great mosque of Cordova, beginning in 786 A.D., two years before his death. The city of Cordova was to be the glory of Umayyads and of the Spanish culture today.

(T.B. Irwing: Spain under Muslim Rule)

was a clergy, a representative of the church, who could not tolerate the triumphant march of Islam in the heart land of Christianity. He could not challenge it through argument or reason, nor it was possible, at that time, to use force to counter its advancement. So he planned to mislead Christian masses through false and malicious means. His translation of the Quran (1), the first in any other language, was an attempt to project a tarnished image of Islam, and thereby scare away the Christians from it.

The introduction of the Arabic numerals (known correctly among the Arabs as the Hindu numerals) and the Persian scientist Khwarizamis' astronomical tables (780 –850 A.C.) can be dated around 1002 A.C., when Ahmad Muslamah Al Majriti, who had picked up their use during his graduate study in the East, passed them on to the monk Gerbert of Aurillac, who became Pope Sylvester (999 – 1003 A.C.) after studying in Spain. Al Majriti means, 'the man from Madrid', then a hill town in Central Spain...If the Northern Spaniards had not been so intolerant, contrary to Gerbert's openness, then longitude today might have been measured on Toledo, not Greenwich. Maslamah of Madrid's contribution of the Hindu concept of Zero released him and European Mathematics from using the Abacus (or their figures) and began to provide Western Europe with a broader sense of time. (T.B Irwing)

(T.B Irwing gives the following statistics about Cordova, 950 A.C.:

Population: 600,000, Shops and Trade Establishment: 92,700, Hospitals: 50, Public Baths: 300, University: 1 with 20,000 students, Madarsahs: 80, Mosques: 600, Public Libraries: 70 (Spain under Muslim Rule, The Muslim World League Journal, Sept. 1994)

(1) Khadija Bawazier in her article on Arab history writes, "Of course Peters' intention could hardly be called an open minded one, let alone benevolent. His reason for wanting to translate the Quran was to demonstrate the influence that Islam was having at that time, over such influential minds as that Monarch William Aquitaine, a man who had virtually steeped in the cultures of

The church, the ruling dynasties, the intelligentsia, all joined hands to paint a horrifying picture of the religion of the moors. A campaign to drive out the moors from Spain gained momentum. Ferdinand's marriage with Isabella, the rulers of Castile, Leon and Aragon in 1469 A.C. was the beginning of the end of Arab Spain. The church under Cardinal Francisco Ximenez (1436-1517) led the campaign of persecution, genocide and vandalism in a systematic way with full help and support of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand. With the fall of Granada, Cordova and Seville, the moors had to flee Spain. Most of them were massacred and their houses were burnt. Children and women were put to slavery. Those who stayed back relying upon Christian charity had to face inquisition, the horrifying torment and torture by the agents of the church (1).

Andalus and Muslim Jerusalem.... In one of the documents left by Peter, the Venerable, he explains the nature and purpose of his goal for translating the sacred texts of Islam. In his opinion, Christians of his time did not understand what a danger Islam was and consequently, they did not put in any resistance to it. He narrow mindedly supposed that were he to translate the Quran, less people would be drawn to Islamic culture.

It is argued that his translation and more particularly his refutations are largely responsible for the inaccuracy of the views of Islam held by Christian Europeans in the middle ages.
(Saudi Gazette, Jan 12, 1994)

(1) Jawaharlal Nehru in 'The Glimpses of World History' writes, "The kingdom of Granada lasted for 200 years. It was pressed and harassed by the Christian states of Spain, especially Castile and sometimes it agreed to pay tribute to Castile... In 1469 A.D. a marriage took place between the rulers of the two principal states, Ferdinand and Isabella, and this united Castile, Aragon, Leon. Ferdinand and Isabella put an end

The moors and the Jews were burnt at the stakes in the public streets, Christian masses rejoicing the occasion, royalty and nobility in their flamboyant attires

to the Arabic kingdom of Granada. The Arabs fought bravely for several years till they were surrounded and hemmed in Granada. Starved out they surrendered in 1497 A.D. Many Saracen or Arabs left Spain and went to Africa. But a large number of Arabs remained in Spain. The treatment of these Arabs is a very dark chapter in the history of Spain. There were cruelty and massacre and the promises made to them about toleration were forgotten. About this time, the Inquisition, that terrible weapon that the Roman church forged to crush all who did not bow down to it, was established in Spain. Jews who had prospered under Saracens were now forced to change their religion and many burnt to death. Women and children were not spared. The infidels (that is the Saracens) so says a historian, were ordered to abandon their picturesque costume and to assume the hats and breeches of their conquerors, to renounce their language, their customs, their ceremonies even their very names and to speak Spanish and behave Spanishly and rename themselves Spaniards. Of course there were risings and revolts against these barbarities. But they were mercilessly crushed.

The Spanish Christians seems to have been very much against washing and bathing. Perhaps they objected to these simply because the Spanish Arabs were very fond of them and had erected great public baths all over the place. The Christians even went so far to issue orders for the reformation of the Moriscos or moors or the Arabs that neither themselves, their women nor any other person should be permitted to wash or bathe themselves either at home or elsewhere, and that all their bathing houses should be pulled down and destroyed.

Apart from the sin of washing, another great charge brought against the Moriscos was that they were tolerant in religion. It is extraordinary to read of this, and yet it was one of the main charges in an account of the Apostasies and Treason of the Moriscos, drawn by Archbishop of Valencia in 1602, when

adorning the seats arranged for them to grace the spiritual ceremony. The priests chanting the praise of God and glorifying the name of Jesus, the prince of peace, performing the 'Act of Faith' with full spiritual exultation overhearing the agonizing cries of the infidels burning at the stake.

he was recommending the expulsion of the Saracens from the Spain. Referring to this he says, "they (the Moriscos) commended nothing so much than the liberty of conscience in all matters of religion which the Turks and all other Mohammedans suffer their subject to enjoy". What a great compliment was thus paid unwittingly to the Saracens in Spain and how different and intolerant was the outlook of the Spanish Christians. (p 190-91)

Describing the expulsion of the Spanish Muslims, T.B Irving in his article 'Spain under the Muslim Rule', says: The final phase came with the decline and final expulsion of the Muslims from Spain. This period belongs to Granada, which lasted on a kingdom from 1231 to 1492 A.D., the same year as Columbus discovered America or Bahamas and Caribbean to be more accurate.

In 1499 A.D., seven years after the treaty of Granada had been signed and which promised Granadians their religious freedom, Cardinal Ximenez de Cisneros (1436-1517) the confessor to Queen Isabella of Castile began the systematic prosecution of the Muslims in Granada and Castile he was the great genocide and book burner of his generation.

The Castilian and ecclesiastical government reduced the Muslims to penury by killing off their leaders and selling their houses and property over their heads, which thrust the helpless women and children into the streets without protectors (as they also did with the Mexican, Mayas, Guatemalans and Peruvians). Many Granadines began to leave for exile in Morocco and

Inquisition (1) is one of the darkest chapters of the history of Christian Europe. They burnt not only the moors and

elsewhere in North Africa. However, the majority remained behind because they felt they were native Spaniards.

The infamous 'Pragmatica or Decree of 1521' (which was reviewed in 1568 during the Alpujarras war to plague the Muslims again) was a vulgar although official invasion of privacy, Muslims or Moriscos, as they were now called, had to keep their windows and doors, open on Fridays and Islamic holidays and could not hold any parties with music...

If the Granadines did not drink wine and eat pork then busy body neighbours called familiars of the Inquisition could denounce them to that "Holy Office". Respectable women were forced to become house servants or worse, while children were seized from their parents and sent to live in other homes. This bald confiscation of property and persons left whole families destitute.

What did these poor women and children manage to do. They were thrust on to the streets to fend for themselves or picked up as house servants at least through what was ironically called "Christian charity". Two thousand women matron and maidens were sold at public auction in Granada in 1502 A.D. and for what purposes? One might ask. Men were sent to the galleys or gallows and to burn at the stake.

During the reign of Philip II (1556-98) those Muslims who remained in Spain and were loyal to Islam grew desperate at the petty surveillance exercised by the police and Inquisition. They rose up in the mountain southeast of Grenada in the year 1568-70 in the war of Alpujarras from the name of those mountains. They were defeated. Their leader was a young noble, Fernando de Velor who resumed his Islamic name of Muhammad bin Umayyah (or Ben Humeya) recalling in this last act of resistance the glories of the Spanish Umayyedes six centuries before.

the Jews (the infidels) but later the Christian heretics were also burnt alive and the church added one of the bloodiest chapters of savagery to the annals of human civilization.

The Arabs had to suffer because of their feuds and

A remnant of these Muslim became exile to Morocco and North Africa but some Mudejar workmen were able to go to Mexico and Spain's other American colonies.

(Muslim World League journal. September 1994)

(1) **Inquisition** : Solomon Grayzel in his "History of the Jews" gives an account of the execution under Inquisition. In 1480 A.D. a number of prominent new Christians were caught celebrating the Seder on the first night of Passover. Queen Isabella of Castile, a very pious Christian, was so shocked by this that she agreed to have the Inquisition establish itself in her country. The Pope had already reluctantly consented. The Marranas now became fanatic and attempted to stop inquisition by force. But all their plots and plans came to naught. A few years later the Inquisition was introduced also into Aragon, after an agreement was reached with king Ferdinand and on the division of confiscated property. Thus was established the torture chambers in which thousands were made to suffer, thus was kindled the fire in which other thousands were burnt alive. For the Inquisition continued in Spain down to the end of eighteenth century.

An auto-da-fe: Auto-da-fe or Act of Faith was the name given to the public execution of the Inquisitor's punishments. It was held in the public squares of the town, made gay with decorations since it was the occasion of public holiday, spectators crowded every roof and window. Royalty and nobility in gala attire, sit on the seats especially provided for them. A scaffold and a pulpit occupied the center of the square. As the church bells tolled the procession filed in; helmeted soldiers carried their halberds, hooded monks and priests chanted praise to God, and the servants of the inquisition shepherded the condemned prisoners. The prisoners were

the insidious weakness and degeneration that invariably entails the downfall of despots and dynasties. The Arab rulers in their attempt to beat their rivals did not hesitate in seeking the help of Christian rulers in their neighbourhood.

arrayed facing the pulpit. They looked gaunt after months of confinement, hunger and terror, some were ill and crippled by the torture they had suffered. Each prisoner carried a candle; each wore a tunic from which the spectators could judge the degree of blasphemy or heresy for which he or she had been convicted. A preacher delivered a long sermon. Then the chief Inquisitor announced the punishments; penance, stripes, confiscation, imprisonment or death. Those destined to die were handed over to the civil government, since the church followed the Divine Law against the taking of life. The inquisitor addressed a final exhortation to those condemned to the scaffold; he urged on them a last minute repentance. Those who professed that they practiced Judaism secretly, but now recognized the Roman church as the sole source of salvation, were first strangled by the executioners. Their bodies were laid on the scaffold besides the living men and women already bound there. A prominent dignitary, sometime, the king himself set fire to the faggots. The tolling of the bells, the cheers of the spectators mingled with the shrieks of the dying. (p 360-361)


Muslim tolerance : (1) As against the persecution, torture and torment, the Jewish Community suffered under the Christian regime in Spain and elsewhere in Europe, this Jewish historian acknowledges the tolerance of the Muslim rulers in Spain in the Arab and North African countries. He writes; Jews were holding high position of trust and honour under various Khalifs. Most important of all for the life of the Jews in Mohammadan lands was the fact that the new religion permitted the Jews to maintain their own communities and live in accordance with their own religious laws under the guidance of Exilarch and the heads of academies. (p-234)

(2) In 711 A.C., the Jews of Spain sighed with relief. After a

They thus, succeeded in crushing their brethren but on the other hand they had to pay a heavy price by ceding part of their territory or revenue to the Christians as a quid Pro quo. Lack of political sagacity and a devastating passion to crush the rivals, made them completely oblivious of the fact that they were in a land surrounded by the enemies, a land where they had not yet, even after the centuries of their stay as rulers, established their firm roots. Europe was still the deadliest enemy of the moors. Roman church had been waging a ceaseless war against the infidels who had occupied a part of the Christian heartland. The Arabs, who had contributed so much to the cultural economic and intellectual development of Europe, were alien to that continent. The Arab rulers and their nobles must have noticed the writings on the walls but their vain glories and vanity held them back to rise to the occasion or get awakened before the death bells began tolling. When Abu Abdullah, the last king of Granada, was exiled after his defeat at the hands of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, he wept bitterly when he cast his last sight at his palace.

dreadful century of physical and religious slavery under the last Visigoths, they were now free. The conquest of Spain by the Mohammadans, meant the removal of barriers to living as Jews. Many of those who fled their homes and gone into exile in North Africa and the Provence now returned to their ancestral land. The Mohammadans to be sure, made no efforts to convert the population. But there was no persecution and the mild political rule of the new masters attracted the Jews emigrants as far away as Babylonia and Persia. (p 290-91)

(Soloman Grayzel, History of the Jews)

(1) Kholā Hasan in her booklet, 'The Crumbling Minarets of Spain', gives a fascinating account of Al Hambra . "This magnificent Moorish palace was built by a series of successive kings and is the name usually associated with Muslim Spain. It is situated right at the very top of the hill with

His mother rebuked him saying, "You cry like a woman for a kingdom you could not defend like a man".

The Architectural Marvels of Arab Spain

The Arabs have left their lasting imprints on the soil of Europe. Even today, the Al Hambra palace of Granada and the Grand Mosque of Cordova are regarded as the architectural marvels of the moors (1).

Cordova: Like Granada (غرناطة), Cordova (قرطبة) was also a shining star of Arab culture and civilisation. The Mosque of Cordova, like Al Hambra, is the manifestation of the Arabs' aesthetic taste in construction (architecture).

the majestic snow-capped Sierras behind it and commanding a picturesque bird eye view of Granada, which lies in the valley below.

After five hours of walking continuously through its confusing maze of square halls, courtyards, balconies, porticoes and lush gardens, we were still not able to see every part of this architectural miracle. I think it is simply impossible to do justice to the beauty and grandeur of the palace. Each room was different and each was an artistic achievement in itself. The walls, ceiling and pillars were covered with geometrical pattern, verses from the Quran, prayers for the royal family, names of the kings and the ever-recurring 'Wala Ghaliba Illa Allah' (ولا غالب الا الله). (And there is no Victor except Allah). This phrase seems to have been the trademark of the Muslims, as it was nearly on everything they left behind.

The patterns were intricate and superb with a glorious rainbow of colours. Many of these designs had been filled in with gold leaf and although not of much value, they had still been scrapped off by tourists. Even the ceiling of each room had

When Iqbal visited Spain, he was fascinated by this architectural marvel and composed his famous poem Masjid Qurtoba (the Mosque of Cordova), one of the masterpieces of his poetic genius and of course, one of the finest piece of Urdu poetry. Paying tribute to the fascinating charm of the mosque, he wrote -

(ہے تہہ گردوں اگر حسن میں تیری نظیر
قلب مسلمان میں ہے اور نہیں ہے کہیں)

If anywhere on the earth there is a rival of thy splendour, it is only in the heart of a Muslim and nowhere else.

its own special design, the most famous of which gives the impression of being studded with stalactites. Our long gaze of admiration of these had, unfortunately adverse effect on our necks.

As most of the building was made of stone and marble, it was deliciously cool despite the blazing sun outside. Among other things the basement also contained the palace baths. A Spanish guide pointed out that leading to these were three pipes; one brought hot water, that was heated in massive storage tanks, the second brought cold water and the third brought scented water with which the royal family perfumed themselves.

The gardens were extensive and picturesque; their tall hedges carefully pruned to the last leaf by the gardeners. Cool fountains, flowers, fruit trees and even ponds filled this labyrinth of green. The spurting water of these fountains (which were present in all shapes and sizes) enhanced the blending of natural beauty with Arabic architecture. Probably the most famous of these is in the Court of Lions, a central fountain supported by twelve carved lions, each squirting water, and flanked by one hundred and twenty-four marble columns. Other consisted of whole avenues of smaller founts, the spurting water of which made enchanting symmetrical patterns when viewed from above. We could only marvel at the ingenuity of the numerous architects who were involved.

Khola Hasan gives an emotional account of her visit to the Mosque. (1)

The Crusades: The invasion of Palestine by Christian Europe was another chapter of brutality, bloodshed, barbarism and betrayal. The Catholic Church gave a call to the Christian Masses to liberate the holy land of Jerusalem from the Muslim infidels. Peter the hermit, a Christian

The different levels of the gardens and the rising towers could be reached by a series of stairs and after climbing an extremely dangerous flight of rickety steps we were able to sweep our eyes over most of the palace. At one end of Al Hambra, we were intrigued by the sight of an exceedingly ugly and disjointed circular building. We were wondering what on earth had possessed the Muslim architects to build such a blot on the landscape. Then we learned that this was actually a palace built by the Christian King Charles V as a memorial to his great rule. No comment.

Below us we could see the remains of the royal stables - for some reason these had been knocked down and only the foundation stone remained.... Granada fell to the combined forces of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella who had married in order to unify their kingdom and so strengthen their forces, in November 1491. The couple entered Al Hambra in full glory and crosses were placed on highest Minaret of this fortified palace from which the Muslims had resisted. (p 11-14)

(1) Cordova deserves its title of the Bride of the Cities, and it has also been described as the jewel of the tenth century world. Its showpiece is a magnificent mosque, the construction of which began in 785 C.E. and which is the most famous building of Spain after the Al Hambra.

Cordova fell to the Christians in 1236, two years before the Granada was captured. Two hundred and eighty years later, the priests of the city asked permission from their king to build a

monk who had returned from Palestine was an itinerant preacher who provoked and instigated the masses to rise against the infidels. He motivated them to join the crusades.

The Pope promised "to forgive the sins of anyone becoming a soldier of the cross and to guarantee admission into the Paradise to anyone who fell in the battle fighting for Christianity".

Europe witnessed a hysterical outburst of morbid excitement. The Church outrageously ignited religious passions of the Christians. In a fanatically charged

cathedral. Not understanding their demands the king agreed, and the priests proceeded to have the center part of the mosque destroyed so that a choir, high altar and transept, main characteristics, could be built in its place. The king saw this when it was too late and although a Christian himself, he was furious, as he had wanted to preserve the mosque in its original splendour. He told them sadly "the thing you have built here could have been built anywhere. But the thing you have destroyed can never be replaced. The mosque has a veritable forest of marble, granite and jasper pillars (eight hundred and fifty remain of the original thousand), Arches in stripes of red and white stone connect these pillars and create a magnificent effect like that of canopies. The simple interior has been filled with chapels, religious paintings, benches and statues. A high altar stands in front of an image of Christ with a row of candles perpetually kept burning. We were obviously subdued by so many changes in what should have been our place of worship and so cooled our tempers by blowing out the candles.

If there was any consolation it was that the Mehrab had been left untouched. Metal railings had been erected to stop it being touched or closely approached. It rested on a state of exquisitely carved marble and was supported by pillars covered in mosaic. The arch above it was beautifully ornamented with

atmosphere, the mob embarked on the mission of liberating the holy land. For more than one and a half century, the Christians clashed with the Muslims. It was not purely a religious affair. Expansion of the authority of the Holy Roman Empire apart, commercial interest and plundering of the Arabs, and particularly the Jews, the wealthy community of all times, were also the real ambitions. (1)

inscriptions from the Quran. This was the only part of the entire building, which was serene and peaceful, as a place of worship deserves to be free from distracting and morbid images of people being crucified and blood flowing everywhere. The rest of the mosque has just been completely desecrated. I was beginning to feel very bitter and sad as we stood quietly opposite the Mehrab, and suddenly my father gave the Adhan as loudly as he could. It must have been centuries since the mosque resounded with the call to prayer and I could not contain my tears any longer. We prayed on the dusty floor for a lost past, a lost glory and a lost people.

The fifty or so tourists around us had frozen still when they heard the Adhan, and throughout our prayers they stood in wondering silence, while their number steadily grew. Although they were silent their cameras certainly were not and flashed continuously when we prayed. The authorities would not have allowed us in, if they had knowledge of our intentions. Sometime before our visit a group of Muslim tourists from the U.K. had been refused entry into the mosque until they had given written guarantee that they will not pray inside. However, they did not hear or disturb us and so we were able to pray in peace. (p 15-17)

(1) They started a tremendous emotional movement. Even children enrolled and set out on a perilous journey, certain that God would guide them on the road... These people were horrified now that it was insistently called to their attention that the sepulcher of Jesus should be in the hands of unbelieving Mohammadans, and they were willing to sacrifice themselves

The Roman church also wanted to establish its supremacy over the orthodox church of eastern Roman Empire at

for its redemption. But there was a great many who had other motives; some of the nobility among the crusaders were nothing more than fortune hunters, looking for land to rule over. Some of the ordinary crusaders were serfs, peasants of the lowest mental type who sought a chance for adventure and for freedom from a dull and servile life. (History of the Jews, p 304-5)

So, large numbers gathered for crusade. Among them were good and earnest people; but there were also many who were far from good, who were attracted by the hope of plunder. It was a strange collection of pious and religious men and the riffraff of the population who were capable of every kind of crimes. Indeed these crusaders, or many of them, going out to serve, in what was to them a noble cause, committed the vilest and most disgracing of crimes. Many were so busy with plundering and misbehaving on the way that they never reached anywhere near Palestine. Some took to massacring Jews on the way; some even massacred their brother Christians. Fed up with their misbehaviour, sometimes the peasantry of the Christian countries, they passed through, rose and attacked them, killing many and driving the others away.

The crusaders at last managed to reach Palestine under a Norman Godfrey of Bouillion. Jerusalem fell to them and in then the carnage lasted for a week. There was a terrible massacre. A French eyewitness of this says that under the Portico of the Mosque the blood was knee deep and reached the horses bridles. Godfrey became the king of Jerusalem.

(Thus, began the crusade in 1095 A.D. and for more than 150 years the struggle continued between Christianity and Islam, between the cross and the crescent.)

Seventy years later, Jerusalem was re-taken from the Christians by Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt. This excited the people of Europe again and several crusades followed. This time

Constantinople*. Obviously all these factors were concealed and the Christian masses, the gullible devotees of Jesus, the Saviour, sacrificed themselves for a cause that was not a holy one. Even the children were seduced to join the mob of the holy combatants. These tender aged soldiers of the Cross had a horrifying experience of their mission. They fell into the hands of unscrupulous elements and were ultimately sold in the slave markets (1).

the king and the emperor of Europe came in person but they had little success.

(Glimpses of World History, p 193-194)

* There were other reasons also for the crusade. Rome wanted once for all to become the boss of Constantinople church, the Constantinople church was different from that of Rome. It called itself, the Orthodox Church and it disliked the Roman church intensively and considered the Pope an upstart. The Pope wanted to put an end to this conceit of Constantinople and to bring it within his fold. Under the cloak of a holy war against the infidel Turks, he wanted to obtain what he had long desired... It is well to remember this conflict between Rome and Constantinople, as it continually crops up during the crusade.

Another reason for the crusades was a commercial one. The business people, especially of the growing ports of Venice and Genoa, wanted them because their trade was suffering. The Saljuk Turks had closed many of their trade routes to the East.

(Glimpses of World History, p-193)

(1) The most terrible of all the crusades, was what is called the children crusade. Large number of young boys, chiefly French and some from Germany, in their excitement left their homes and decided to go to Palestine. Many of them died on the way, many were lost. Most of them reached Marseilles and there these poor children were tricked and their enthusiasm was taken advantage of by scoundrels. Under the pretext of taking them to the holy land, slave traders took them on their ship, carried them

“The chief result of the crusade was to bring death and misery to millions of Christians and Muslims and again to soak Asia Minor and Palestine with human blood”.

(Nehru)

The bloody events of crusades and blood bath in Spain, is now a chapter of European history of its dark ages. Europe blames Islam for bloodshed, terrorism and persecution, completely ignoring the annals of its past and present history. European scholars, particularly the orientalist, who tried to find fault with the Islamic scriptures or the so called historians who left no stone unturned to distort history to prove that the Muslim sovereigns were the embodiment of repression and intolerance who were interested only in forcible conversion of their non-Muslim subject or imposing Jizya on them, are oblivious of their past history or have no moral courage of retrospection. Let them go through the Spanish history. How the church and the Christian rulers behaved. How the moors ruled there. How much the Arabs contributed to the cultural and economic development of their kingdom that heralded the era of enlightenment and progress in Europe, which was groping in the darkness of ignorance, superstition and the people were the target of savage persecution by the Catholic Church. History bears testimony that it was Islam or to be precise, the Arab Muslims of Spain, who ushered Europe to the threshold of civilization, enlightenment and progress. The honest and conscientious scholars acknowledge the indebtedness of Christian Europe to Islam and the Muslims. But how the enlightened Europe repaid its debt to Islam and the Muslims? How terribly the Muslims have suffered at the hands of the Europeans. After extirpating the moors in

to Egypt and sold them to slavery.

(Glimpses of World History, p-195)

Spain, Christian imperialism colonized Indian sub-continent. How savage had the alien traders turned rulers, been to their Indian subject and how brutally they plundered the country and economically ruined the population, is a bleeding chapter of our history. The 20th century saw the dreaded face of European imperialism. Christian powers of Europe joined hands to defeat and disintegrate Ottoman Caliphate (Khilafat-e-Ustmania). They liberated the Christian countries of Eastern Europe from Turkish rule but colonized the Muslim countries of West Asia after World War I. Britain and France divided the Arab countries between themselves. The entire Muslim world from Africa to Far East, from Morocco to Malaya, was enslaved by the White Christianity. Political vendetta and economic exploitation ruined the people and devastated the countries. Palestine was given to the Zionists and thus the seeds of a perpetual conflict, confrontation and tension have been sown by the Christian Europe in the Arab land.

In the recent past, what happened in Bosnia. How the allied forces of Christian Europe, under the United States of America, behaved in Iraq during the Gulf War in 1991. To maintain their standard of living they annihilated the Arabs. With a bleeding heart and a lacerated soul, every Muslim silently observes all that has been happening and how terribly the Christian West has had devastated and destroyed the Muslim world. From Granada to Baghdad the horrible events tell the story of the Danse Macabre. The crusades have been continuing till date. Christian Europe cried at the Nazi massacre of the Jews and handed over Arab Palestine to those persecuted by a sister Christian nation of Europe but when Zionists behaved exactly like the Nazis and massacred the innocent Palestinian Arab Muslims, there were no cries of pain, no scruples. The standard bears of Universal love and the

champions of human rights have been a mute spectator to this carnage. They were silent and are still mute. How terribly the Muslims have suffered at the hands of Christian Europe, during the past seven centuries, to borrow the words of Syed Amir Ali- "It will take combined charity of Jesus and Mohammad to make Islam forget and forgive the terrible wrongs inflicted by the Christian Europe upon the Andulasian (Spanish Muslims) (1).

(1) What the world has lost and how much humanity has suffered on account of the defeat of the Muslims and their retreat in Europe. Syed Amir Ali gives an account.

The two failures of the Arabs: The one before Constantinople and the other in France retarded the progress of the world for ages and put back the hour hand of time for centuries. Had the Arabs been less keen for the safety of their spoils, less divided among themselves, had they succeeded in driving before them the barbarian hosts of Charles Martel, the history of the darkest period in the annals of the world would never have been written. The renaissance, civilization, the growth of intellectual liberty would have been accelerated by seven hundred years.

Stagnation of the Muslims: But to explain the stagnation of the Muslims in the present days, it is necessary to glance back for the moment at the event that transpired in Spain, in Africa and in Asia between the twelfth and the seventeenth century. In the former country, Christianity destroyed intellectual life of the people. The Muslims had turned Spain into a garden; the Christians turned it into a desert. The Muslims had covered the land with colleges and schools; the Christians transformed it into churches for the worship of saints and images. The literary and scientific treasures amassed by the Muslim sovereigns were consigned to the flames. The Muslim men, women and children were ruthlessly butchered or burnt at the stakes; a few who were spared were reduced to slavery.

Those who had fled were thrown on the shores of Africa as helpless beggars. It would take the combined charity of Jesus and Muhammad to make Islam forget and forgive the terrible wrongs inflicted by the Christians of Spain upon the Andalusian Muslims.

(The Spirit of Islam, p 399-400)

ISLAM IN INDIA

Islam was introduced into India by the Arab traders. The Arabs had established trade relations with India long before the advent of Islam. They brought their merchandise in their boats and disembarked on the coasts of Calicut and Surat and while sailing back carried coconut, pepper and other condiments to Arabia. When Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessings be upon him) called them to Islam, they responded to the call, embraced Islam and then brought the Divine message to India. Islam had completely transformed them, their piety, righteousness, honesty and humility was manifest in all their dealings. This attracted the people towards them and Islam spread in the coastal areas of India (1).

Malabar emerged as the main Islamic region. Zamurin, the king of Malabar, is also said to have embraced Islam. The simple teachings of Islam, equality, Universal brotherhood and congregational (collective) prayers in which all, high and low, stood in the same row, attracted the masses, particularly those called the untouchables (*sudras*) who had been denied the right of

(1) The frequent intercourse inevitably led to India getting to know the new religion Islam. Missionaries also came to spread the new faith and they were welcomed. Mosques were built. There was no objection raised by the state or the people, nor were there any religious conflict. It was the old tradition of India to be tolerant to all the faiths and forms of worship. Thus, Islam came as a religion to India several centuries before it came as a political force.

(Discovery of India, p-229)

leading a life with dignity, by the Brahminical system. It was during the early years of the eighth century A.C. (first century Hijra) that the Arab army under the command of young Muhammad bin Qasim conquered Sindh (712 A.C.) and Islam stepped in as a ruling power in India.

The Arabs of the early Islamic period were full of missionary zeal. Every trader, soldier, scholar and even a layman was a preacher. The Muslim army was a force of disciplined and righteous soldiers. Their behaviour was totally different from an occupying army. They were kind, compassionate, God fearing and dedicated to their mission. Their humane character attracted the local population towards them.

The Arabs had brought with them pristine teachings of their religion, a clear and bright concept of monotheism free from all exotic elements.

The new rulers treated their subject with compassion. They were tolerant and generous towards them. They did not follow the policy of persecution. No place of worship was demolished; there was no forced conversion to Islam. The priests were allowed to perform their religious rites in their temples. A nominal tax was, however, imposed upon the local population and Brahmins were assigned the duty to collect the same. The Muslim (Arab) rulers gave them all the facilities and privileges meant for the people of the Scripture (Ahle Kitab) under the Islamic Shariah.

But the Indian territories did not remain under the Arab control for long. The local Muslim chiefs established their own independent rule in Sindh. Then came the Turks, the Ghaznavis, the Ghauris, the Lodhis and the Mughals with their armies. They crossed to India through Khyber-

Pass and brought with them a tarnished image of Islam. It was a synthesis of mysticism, sectarian jurisprudence, un-Islamic beliefs and local customs unknown to the Arab Islam (1).

(1) Islam was to come to India both as a religion and a political force and create many new problems, but it is well to remember that it took a long time before it made much difference to the Indian scene. It was nearly 600 years before it reached the heart of India, and when it came to the accompaniment of political conquest, it had already changed much and its standard bearers were different. The Arabs, who, in a fine frenzy of enthusiasm and with a dynamic energy had spread out and conquered from Spain to the border of Mongolia, carrying with them a brilliant culture, did not come to India proper. They stopped at the north-western fringe and remained there. Arab civilization gradually decayed and various Turkish tribes came into prominence in central and western Asia. It was these Turkish and Afghan from the Indian borderland who brought Islam as a political force to India.

(Discovery of India, p-22)

“Islamic achievements through expeditions and conquests were, in my view, extremely detrimental to the cause of Islam, as it hampered the growth of democratic and economic norms as enshrined in the Quran and the Hadith (Traditions). No doubt the Muslims established a grand empire but at the same time their political outlook was subdued by un-Islamic approach. They lost sight of the fact that how vast was the circumference of the hold of Islamic principles. Diffusion is undoubtedly the objective of Islam but conquests are not needed to achieve it. The plain and simple teachings of Islam free from delicate and intricate metaphysical theories, and which are in absolute conformity with human reason, are sufficient to achieve this objective. Islam has such latent merits in its nature that by virtue of these qualities it can reach the highest point of success”.

Iqbal (Urdu Letters) compiled by Syed Muzaffar Hussain Burney (Vol. II)

These kings established their dynastic rule in India. They fought battles to expand the borders of their empire, built palaces, forts, mosques and mausoleums to display their majestic grandeur and imperial might. But they failed to disseminate the message of peace, love and fraternity as preached by Islam.

Some of them came to plunder, and carried away the treasures of India to their kingdom. They even destroyed the places of worship. It was absolutely against the Islamic teachings of tolerance. Such reckless adventurism and vandalism was very much detrimental to the Islamic cause. As these despots happened to be the Muslims, many scholars, whose minds were obfuscated by their prejudice against Muslims, raised incriminating fingers at Islam. History bears testimony that the Arabs, the real standard bearer of Islamic teachings, did not destroy any place of worship anywhere. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had enjoined the Muslim soldiers not to kill old men, women and children, not to disturb priests and ascetics and others taking refuge in a place of worship, not to burn standing crops and not to cut the trees laden with fruits.

The enlightened caliphs of Islam invariably reminded the army commanders to abide by the enjoins of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). The Arabs therefore, never indulged in vandalism (1). When Muhammad bin

(1) Shibli Nomani in his book *Al Faruq* ("Biography of Umar bin Alkhattab"- the second enlightened Caliph of Islam) while giving an account of the fall of Madain, the then Capital of Persia, writes that when the Arab army entered the royal palace, there were statues and idols installed everywhere in the palace. The Arabs did not break or remove any statue and offered their congregational prayer on the open ground of the palace. Shibli

Qasim conquered Multan, there was a grand ancient temple in the town. No damage was caused to the temple and a mosque was constructed at some distance from it on a vacant piece of land. In the 10th century A.C. when the Ismailies from Egypt occupied the town, they demolished the temple and closed the mosque (1).

There are historical evidences of the tolerance of Arabs who inherited Islamic values directly from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). They imbibed them and discharged their seminal obligations in the various regions of the world as preachers, teachers, traders and soldiers. But those who received the divine message from their non-Arab mentors who had blurred view of the faith due to their alignment with some mystical order or sectarian jurisprudence, and were themselves unaware of the sublime moral values of Islam. These common people had no direct access to the Quran and the Hadith and their mentors did not go beyond the mystical theories and juristic presumptions.

We have very brilliant instances of compassion and administration of justice in the reign of the enlightened Caliphs of Islam; particularly during the Caliphate of Hazrat Umar bin Al Khattab, the second enlightened Caliph, when the Arab had conquered Syria, Persia, Iraq, Egypt and many other neighbouring states and millions of the non-Muslims had come under the Islamic rule.

comments "Our scholars will exclaim that Saad, the commander of the Arab army, who was a prominent companion of Allah's Messenger (PBUH) did not behave like Mahmud Ghaznavi and Aurangzeb and let all the statues remain intact at their respective places".

(p-58)

(1) Aab-e-Kausar (Urdu, p-38, Shaikh Muhammad Ikram)

The Arabs treated them with compassion. The Zimmis (non-Muslims in a Muslim state) enjoyed full freedom of worship and other civil rights.

Umar bin Abdul Aziz, the Umayyad Caliph had issued orders that coercion must not be resorted to recover Jizyah tax from the Zimmis. Hajjaj bin Yusuf, the notorious and the most tyrant Umayyad governor of Iraq, had imposed Jizyah on the newly converted Muslims with a view to enhance state revenue. Umar bin Abdul Aziz abolished all such repressive imposts. He issued a decree that all those who had embraced Islam will be exempted from the payment of Jizyah once for all. This order had a very salutary effect and people in large number embraced Islam. Consequently the recovery under the Jizyah dwindled. The governors of the provinces reported to the Caliph that after his orders of exemption from Jizyah, so many people have embraced Islam that revenue recovery under this head is almost nil. Umar bin Abdul Aziz wrote back that Allah had sent his Messenger (PBUH) to guide the people and not for collecting Jizyah. It will never be reimposed in any case (1).

(1) Tarikh-e-Islam Vol II (Shah Muniruddin Ahmad Nadvi) Umar bin Abdul Aziz (99-101 A.H) (717-719 A.C) was an ideal ruler. He was the great grandson of Umar bin Alkhatab, the second enlightened Caliph of Islam (his mother was the grand daughter of Hazrat Umar). He restored all the rights of the non-Muslims, suppressed by the Umayyad Caliphs. No persecution or repression was allowed. A Muslim family had occupied a church, the Christians petitioned to the Caliph, Umar bin Abdul Aziz got the church vacated and handed over its possession to them.

Once a Muslim filed a suit that a church had been built on his land. After hearing the arguments of the parties, the

However, this digression was just to show that Islam does not allow to follow a policy of intolerance and persecution against non-Muslims. The despots who deviated from the right path as guided by Islam, had done a great disservice to the cause of their religion. It alienated the people and there was an aversion to Islam. Even some of the renowned and reliable scholars could not suppress their disgust at the reckless military expeditions (1).

But to ascribe it to Islam or blame the Islamic teachings is something that cannot be justified. Islam did not come with them holding a sword, nor the monarchs and the commanders, leading their armies, were the representatives of Islam. Islam had come to India many

Caliph ruled that the church existed on the land when the covenant was signed, so the claim was not tenable now. He restored all the properties of the non-Muslims usurped by the members of the royal family.

An official forced a non-Muslim, to offer his horse for official purposes. When the Caliph got the report of his high handedness, he awarded a punishment of forty lashes to the erring official.
(Tarikh-e-Islam)

(1) These repeated incursions from the northwest brought many new elements in to India's closed thoughts and economy. Above all they brought Islam for the first time, to the accompaniment of ruthless military conquests. So far, for over three hundred years, Islam had come peacefully as a religion and taken its place among the many religions of India without trouble or conflict. The new approach produced powerful psychological reaction among the people and filled them with bitterness. There was no objection to a new religion but there was strong objection to anything, which forcibly interfered with and upset their way of life.

(Discovery of India, p – 236)

centuries before these incursions.

Can anyone say that Christianity came to India along with the canons of East India Company; although there were concerted efforts by the traders and the missionaries to proselytize the Indians? The 1857 uprising was a clear manifestation of the Indian soldiers' apprehension that the white rulers wanted to defile their faith.

However, no such efforts were ever made by any Muslim ruler. Unlike the Christian missionaries, no Muslim scholar ever challenged the scholars of the other religions, nor religious literature was compiled and distributed with a view to proselytize the masses.

Had the Muslim rulers and scholars made such concerted efforts during their political paramountcy of over seven centuries it would have had changed, the demographic ratio of the sub continent.

In view of this historical fact, how can one assert that Islam or the Muslim rulers, barring a few ones, forcibly interfered and upset their (Indian) way of life?

If the advent of a mighty wave of a new culture and thoughts is objectionable, then the Aryans will also have to bear the blame of a forcible interference and upsetting the way of life. History confirms the Aryan incursion on India. They came to India through the mountain of Hindu Kush. They occupied Punjab after defeating the original inhabitants and ultimately conquered the greater part of north India (1).

(1) The word "Arya" is borrowed from Arya in Sanskrit or Aryan in Zend, which means 'of good family'. There are many

History also bears testimony to the Gauris and the Ghaznavis incursion on India. They also came from Afghanistan. They also occupied Punjab after defeating the inhabitants and ultimately conquered the greater part of north India. These two instances from the Indian history, seen in juxtaposition, are almost identical. The plunder and pillage by Mehmud Ghaznavi, was recorded by the historians for the posterity but what the Aryans did, how they treated the defeated Indians aboriginals is not known as men had not yet learned the art of recording the annals. There were no chroniclers to compile the historical events. So the Aryans were saved from being exposed by ruthless historical scrutiny. But one can easily conjecture the way the Aryan victors had behaved. The fact that the original inhabitants were relegated to the abject status of *sudras* (the untouchables) in the Brahminical caste system speaks volumes for their behaviour. Undoubtedly it was a forcible interference with, and upsetting the way of life of the original inhabitants of India. It was because the Aryans had brought the faith and culture to the accompaniment of ruthless military conquest.

And what happened to Buddhism in India. Gautam Buddha, revolted against the Brahminical hold on the

theories about the origin of these people. The most accepted view is that they lived in the great steppe land, which stretches from Poland to central Asia. They were semi nomad people. In the second millennium B.C. they started moving from their original home and migrated westward. In the course of their journey to the east or south a group of Aryans had settled in Iran and developed a civilization of their own. Later one branch of them crossed the Hindu Kush and entered India through Afghanistan. They occupied the Punjab after defeating the original inhabitants and ultimately occupied the greater part of north India.

Indian masses. He rejected the theory of varn Ashram (caste system) and preached universal fraternity and equality. His radical concept of human brotherhood awakened the masses, who had been crushed under the Brahminical caste system. Buddhism spread by leaps and bounds in India and Brahminism was now in a defensive position. Under the imperial patronage of Ashoka, the great, Buddhism flourished in and outside Indian subcontinent.

But as a western scholar posed the question that what was it that enabled Hinduism to push-away organized Buddhism from India? (1)

The answer of the Indian intellectual was that Buddhism died a natural death in India or rather it was a

India- Early History- (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.)

(1) Nehru: Discovery of India (p 178-179)

Explaining how Hinduism absorbed Buddhism in India, he tells us "Brahminism made Buddha an *Avtar*, a God, so did Buddhism".

Meanwhile, there had been a revival of Brahminism and a great cultural renaissance under the imperial Guptas in the fourth and the fifth centuries A.C. This was not anti-Buddhist in any way but it certainly increased the importance and power of Brahminism.

In the 8th century Shankar Acharya, one of the greatest Indian philosophers, started religious orders or "*Maths*" for Hindu Sanyasis or monks. This was an adoption of the old Buddhist practice of the Sanghs. Previously there had been no such organization of Sanyasis in the Brahminism, although small groups of them existed.

(Discovery of India, p 179-180)

fading out and a transformation into something else.

At another place this illustrious historian tells us, "I visited countries where Buddhism is still a living and dominant faith (p-130). Then he himself poses a question, 'Was Buddhism passive or pessimistic?' and then argues...When I think of the Buddhism, no such feeling arise in me, nor can I imagine that a religion based mainly on passivity and pessimism could have had such a powerful hold on vast number of human beings, among them the most gifted of their kind...Under the imperial patronage of Ashoka, it spread rapidly and became the dominant faith in many neighbouring lands."

One may ask that how it was that a religion which is still a living and dominant faith in many neighbouring lands and which was not passive and pessimistic and had its hold on the most gifted of their kind, died a natural death in the land of its birth?

Had the fusion of a living and dominant Buddhism and the fading Brahminical faith been a smooth process? Did the most gifted ones of their kind meekly submitted to the assumptive wonderful power of Hinduism, or there had been a fierce resistance and violent opposition to the process of assimilation? If Buddhism was not passive and pessimistic, how the aggressive Brahminism was able to devour it so easily? However, it is not purported to rack up a controversy. The digression was just to show that it was not Islam alone that came to the accompaniment of ruthless military conquests, but the Aryans, the Brahminism and then Christianity had also followed the same course.

The Muslim rulers:

The Turks, Afghans and Mughals came to India and

established their dynastical rule. They conquered the land, ruled, died and were buried in this very land. They may have been foreigners but they adopted India as their home. Shared power with their subject and were gradually Indianised (1). The Mughals shaped India into a vast and united country by integrating its various regions under their empire.

Mughal dynasty was founded by Babur*, who came from Farghana (Turkistan) in 1526 A.C., defeating Ibrahim Lodhi, he captured Delhi. In 1529 A.C. he defeated the coalition armies of Rajputs and Lodhis under the command of Rana Sanga, and became the first Mughal emperor of India. But he did not live long and died in 1530 A.C., just four years after his triumphant march to Delhi. His eldest son Humayun succeeded him who was soon defeated by Sher Shah Suri.

(1) What is called the Muslim or the medieval period brought another change...The invaders who came to India from the northwest, like so many of their predecessors in more ancient times, became absorbed into India and part of her life. Their dynasties became Indian and there was a great deal of racial fusion by inter marriages... They looked to India as their home country and had no other affiliation. India continued to be an independent country.

(Discovery of India, p-238)

* Babur is an attractive person ... bold and adventurous, fond of art and literature... His grand son Akbar is even more attractive and has greater qualities. Daring and reckless, an able general and yet gentle and full of compassion an idealist and dreamer... In him the old dream of a united India again took shape, united not only politically in one state but organically fused into one people... Many a proud Rajput chiefs who would not have submitted to any other person, he won over on his side. He married a Rajput princess and his son and successor Jahangir,

Babur was a valiant soldier and sagacious ruler. He had only four years to live in India and this short period was full of turmoil and trepidation. But he minutely observed the characteristics of the people of India and recorded his observations in his memoirs (Tuzk-e-Babari). As a poet he had a deep esthetic sense and a romantic imagination.

He had a remarkable sense of governance and knew the psychology of the people. In his will, addressed to his son and successor Humayun, he advised him to rule with compassion and justice and never meddle in the religious affairs of his subject (1).

was thus a half Mughal and half Rajput Hindu. Thus racially this Turk Mongol Dynasty became far more Indian than Turk or Mongol.

(Discovery of India, p-259)

(1) "My darling son, India is inhabited by the people of different faiths. It is a boundless grace of Allah that He has made you the sovereign of this country. So bear in mind the following points for your governance: -

- Never allow yourself to be swayed by prejudice in the religious matters. Having regard to the susceptibilities and rites of the people, treat them as equal and deal with justice without undue favour to anyone.
- Particularly refrain from cow slaughter. It will endear you among the people and with a passion of gratitude they will become subservient to you.
- Never destroy place of worship of any community and be just to your entire subject. It will ensure cordial relations between the ruler and the ruled and will guarantee peace in the country.
- Dissemination of Islam is best possible through love and compassion and not by persecution and coercion.
- Always ignore the differences between *Shias* and *Sunnis*; else it will harm the unity of Islam.

Sher Shah Suri ruled the country only for five years. But these five years were the golden period of the medieval history of north India. Sher Shah Suri was an ideal ruler, a great administrator. He was a man of extraordinary calibre and has left indelible imprints of his administrative reforms and gave a new and better revenue system. Historians are unanimous in their opinion that he was the ablest and the best ruler of all the Afghan kings. He died in 1545 A.C., while fighting at Kalenger. Humayun, who had fled to Persia, returned with Iranian soldiers and recaptured Delhi in 1555 A.C. But six months later he died. Akbar was born in 1546 A.C., when Humayun was wandering in the desert of Rajputana having been defeated by Sher Shah Suri. When his father died Akbar was a boy of 13. His tutor Beram Khan crowned him in Punjab. His fifty years as the emperor of India were epoch making in the Indian history. He was the third ruler of his dynasty and the first who established a grand and mighty Mughal empire.

His early days of life were the period of turmoil. His father Humayun had been desperately trying to regain his lost empire. So Akbar could not receive formal education and was illiterate. But he was very fond of knowledge and had an unsaturating quest for learning. He used to get the famous books on religion, literature, ethics, social and political sciences read out to him. He was a man of a very sharp intellect and a lasting association with the scholars had polished it all the more. In his early days he was a devout Muslim. And even gave the call for the prayers and led congregational prayers. Makhdumul Mulk Abdullah Sultanpuri and Mullah Abdul Nabi Sadrus

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- Take the different characteristics of the people as the different weathers of the year. It will save your government from the diseases and debilities of the changing season. (Rud-e-Kausar, p-23)

Sudur were the highest ecclesiastical authorities in the Mughal Empire. Akbar held them in great reverence. Both were erudite scholars but the feuds between the two great theologians ultimately made the emperor weary of them. Their extremist outlook in the religious matters, persecution of the pious and eminent scholars who did not see eye to eye with them and Abdullah's avarice for worldly wealth and power had belittled them in the eyes of the emperor. He wanted to get rid of them. The polemical confrontation among the vociferous scholars at the royal Ibadatkhana gatherings had convinced him that the theologians were narrow minded, intolerant and uncompromising in their approach. So, he distanced himself from them. It was during this time that Akbar came across with a theologian who was liberal in his approach. The emperor confided with him. The scholar who had been persecuted by Makhdumal Mulk Abdullah Sultanpuri for his liberal views and had to flee with his family to save himself from the ecclesiastical wrath, suggested to the emperor that as the commander of the faithful, he had the power to promulgate or abrogate any religious decree, provided it was not against the commandments of the Quran and the enjoins of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). Akbar had already made up his mind to get rid of both the supreme clergies. So he entrusted the duty of chalking out the scheme to dismiss the theologians from their high position and spiritual authority.

The scholar, Mullah Mubarak whose two sons Faizi and Abul Fazl were now holding important positions in the imperial court, drafted a Mehzar (charter) declaring that the emperor by virtue of his supreme position as the shadow of God on earth and the commander of the faithful was competent to issue his edict in any disputed religious

matter (1).

(1) Mehzar (the Charter)

The purpose of this memorandum is that with the blessings of the good governance and fair administration of the emperor, India has now become the center of peace and an orbit of justice and compassion. Flocks of the people, particularly the enlightened theologians and erudite scholars, who are the guides in the way of nobility and the wayfarers on the path of sublimity in knowledge, from Arabia and Persia, have travelled to India and adopted this country as their homeland.

All the eminent scholars who have intimate knowledge of the principles and the offshoots of learning and have command over all the disciplines of literature, philosophy and logic and are well known for their piety and honesty, after deep consideration and ample deliberations in the subtle meanings of the Quranic verse "Obey Allah, Obey the messenger (of Allah) and the men of authority amongst you" and the authentic Hadith -That the most endeared person to Allah on the day of judgement will be a just ruler. Whoever obeyed the just ruler, he obeyed me and whoever disobeyed him he disobeyed me etc. In the light of evidences based on reason and the arguments enshrined in the books, have decided and declared that the status of a just ruler is superior to that of a Mujtahid (scholar who is competent to infer independently in the religious matters on the analogy of the enjoins of Shariah) and the emperor of Islam, shadow of God upon the people at large, commander of the faithful, Abul Fateh Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar Shah Ghazi, may Allah perpetuate his empire, is by the grace of Allah, the most just, most learned and the most intelligent ruler.

Therefore in such religious matters where there is a difference of opinion among the theologians, the emperor with his sound mind and bright intellect and keeping in view the convenience of the public and the expediences of general administration, can issue his edict in such disputed propositions

The theologians were forced to sign and put their seal on the memorandum. Makhdumul Mulk Abdullah Sultanpuri and Shaikh Abdul Nabi Sadrus Sudur, had also to endorse it. Then there began the reign of terror and persecution. The theologians who opposed the imperial motives had to pay a heavy price for their temerity. Mullah Muhammad Yazdi, chief Qazi of Jaunpur and Mullah Muhammad Yaqub, chief Qazi of Bangala vehemently opposed the memorandum. They were summoned to the imperial court and were treacherously murdered. The emperor promulgated a new creed named Din-e-Ilahi. Abul Fazl, son of Mullah Mubarak who had drafted the memorandum, was the chief vice reagent (خلیفہ اعظم) of the new cult. Akbar began to initiate his court nobles into it. The converts were called Royal Disciples (مریدان شاہی). Din-e-Ilahi was something eclectic, some of its tenets like obeisance to light, sun and fire, were taken from the Zoroastrian faith, and the ban on animal slaughter from the Jainism. (1)

and it will be deemed as based on consensus and obeying there of will be obligatory on all.

Similarly, if in accordance with his discreet opinion he issues a decree, provided it does not violate the commandments of the shariah, and is purported to provide relief to the public, compliance there of will be definite and mandatory. Opposition there to will cause torment in the world here after and also will be a cause of spiritual and temporal determinant.

These lines abounding in truth, have been written, for the sake of Allah and for the enforcement of Islamic law in accordance with the memorandum of the theologians and the enlightened jurists, in the month of Rajab 987 A.H. (Corresponding to August 1579 A.C.)

Rud-e-kausar (Shaikh Muhammed Ikram) p-103
(Translated from Urdu)

The new creed was in direct collision with Islam. Fire worship, obeisance to light and the sun and similar other beliefs of the cult were absolutely against the teachings of Islam. Islam fiercely teaches monotheism and rejects the doctrine of pantheism, polytheism and fetishism. The promulgation of the Din-e-Ilahi caused serious turmoil in the empire. There was a general opinion among the people that the emperor had started a new religion and had become an apostate. In Bihar and Bengal there was a public uprising. Some court nobles went to the extent that they planned to dethrone him and proclaim his brother Hakim Mirza, Amir of Kabul as the new emperor of India. Akbar, however, managed to crush the uprising. (2).

(1) Akbar adopted the practice of sun and the fire worship as he saw in them the manifestation of the effulgence of God. His inclination towards the non-violence was due to Jain influence and Muslim Sufis, who had been practicing it since long time.

His Din-e-Ilahi has aroused great controversy. But it was not a religion in the accepted sense of the word. It did not possess a scripture; it had no priests or prescribed form of worship... The door of Din-e-Ilahi was not open to all. It involved several grades of sacrifice... the Din-e-Ilahi had only a small following and was symbolic of the ethical and spiritual liberation of the emperor. (India-Medieval period)

(2) What Akbar was aiming at is not clear. Did he look on the question purely as a political one? In his desire to evolve a common nationality did he want to force the different religions into one channel, or was he religious in his motives and his quest? I don't know but I am inclined to think that he was more of a statesman than a religious reformer. Whatever his object may have been, he actually proclaimed a new religion. The Din-e-Ilahi, of which he himself was the head. In religion as in other matters his autocracy was to be unchallenged and there was a lot of disgusting prostrations and kissing the feet and the like.

The new creed did not flourish. Even his confident court nobles like Man Singh and Todar Mal, did not show any interest in the new cult. Akbar advised Man Singh to get himself initiated as the royal disciple but he respectfully declined it. Only those courtiers, who had been hankering to display their fealty and cringe, and thus win the pleasure of the emperor, came forward to be converted to the new creed. These obsequious converts had to offer reverential prostration to the emperor, and kissed his feet. They greeted one another with the words "Allah-o-Akbar" and reciprocated by "Jalla Jala lahu". The greeting was ostensibly harmless but there was a sophistry in the obviously pious term. The implied reference was to the name of the emperor "Jalaluddin" and his title "Akbar". The casuistic greeting was thus meant to glorify him.

The scholars of different faiths, who assembled at the Ibadat Khana, led Akbar astray. Their wrangling, charges, counter charges, rejecting the spiritual philosophy of other religions and their intolerant behaviour had disillusioned the emperor. The scholars while attacking one another eulogized the emperor that he had great spiritual talents (1).

The new religion did not catch. All it did was to irritate the Muslims.

(Glimpses of World History, p-311)

(1) The Nusairies and the Halulies declared that the emperor was the manifestation of God (Mazhar-e-Haque) ... Some Hindu scholars called him the Jagat Guru. They tried to prove from their scriptures that he was the one who will resolve the differences among the nations and religions. The sycophant courtiers supported the absurdities of the scholars. These pretensions must have seduced Akbar's mind that he could assume the spiritual authority also together with his supreme temporal position. So he began to initiate people into his new

The Jesuit clergies from Goa, had been trying hard to convert him to Christianity. They sent report to Portugal that Akbar was willing to embrace their faith. They were so eager in their mission that in his last moments they desperately tried to contact him so as to baptize him on his deathbed, but they failed in their efforts.

Akbar died in 1605 A.C. He ruled the country for about half a century and left behind an empire that was unique in its structure. It was for the first time in Indian history that the non-Muslims were given an equal share in the administration. The Rajputs played a very important role in strengthening the foundations of the Mughal Empire. Akbar, although an illiterate, was politically a sagacious ruler and a man of deep insight and foresight. He conceived the idea of sharing power with his Indian subject. His political acumen had convinced him that no ruler could establish a vast and mighty empire without winning the confidence of the local population, and the best way to win them over was to share power with them. So he established matrimonial relations with the Rajputs, the martial race of the Hindus. Raja Bhagwan Dass, Man Singh, Todarmal and Birbal were among his most confident and senior officials. He also tried to revive literary contacts between the two communities, and ordered Faizi, the poet laureate of his court, to translate the Gita, the scripture of Hindu spiritual philosophy into Persian. Faizi composed the poetic translation with the help of a number of Sanskrit scholars, and thus there was

cult, they were called Muridan-e-Shahi (Royal disciples). Abul Fazl was appointed the chief vice regent (Khalifa-e-Azam) of the cult. Tenets and rites were prescribed for the converts. They greeted one another with the words "Allah-o-Akbar" and returned it by saying "Jalla-Jala lahu".

(Rud-e-Kausar, p-118)

the first intellectual interaction between the Hindu and the Muslim scholars. The Muslim scholars, however, made no efforts to translate Islamic literature into Sanskrit or other regional Indian languages. Akbar also did not think of getting the Quran translated into Sanskrit to enlighten the Hindu scholars on the Islamic teachings and its spiritual philosophy. The Muslim scholars were vociferous debaters at the imperial Ibadat Khama, they profusely used Greek philosophy and logic to bring home their points, but most of them were unable to refute the charges levelled against Islam by the Portuguese (Jesuit) priests who had brought with them the Latin translation of the Quran and frequently quoted from it. Since Akbar followed the policy of Sulh-e-kul (peace with all) every one was free to speak out his mind. But sometimes when the Muslim scholars were dumb founded, he had to come to their rescue. His intervention often saved them from humiliation.

It is most unfortunate that the theologians betrayed Islam and failed in their duty of disseminating the message of love. Faizi translated the Gita into Persian but did not translate the Quran into Sanskrit or Hindi. Faizi and Tulsi Dass were contemporaries. Tulsi Dass compiled Ramcharat Manas or Ramayana in Hindi and made the most valuable contribution to the Hindu literature and culture. It was a great spiritual service to the masses and the classes. But Faizi wrote commentary on the Quran in Arabic, in a unique literary style. He compiled his book "Sawateul Ilham" (تفسير غير منقوط) applying the style of writing where not a single word having a dot (Nuqta) on or under it, was used. It was nothing but a pedantic display of his scholarship. It has no place in the literary or religious literature and in fact was an exercise in futility. Had Faizi translated the Quran in to Persian it would have served a great purpose and the Hindu scholars who had acquired proficiency in the state language (Persian) could have had

a chance to enlighten themselves on Islam. No biography of the messenger of Allah (PBUH) was compiled to make the non-Muslim aware of his revolutionary and ideal character. No doubt Muslim scholars in India compiled books on Greek philosophy, logic grammar sectarian jurisprudence, as these were included in the curricula of the Islamic schools. But these books were mostly in Arabic and of no use in the diffusion of the religion. It was Shah Waliullah (1703-1762 A.C.) the great revolutionary theologian of the post Aurangzeb period who translated the Quran in to Persian and the Muslim had, for the first time, a direct access to their scripture and Islam was liberated from the monopolistic hold of unscrupulous theologians, although he had to risk his life for it.

However, after Akbar, Jahangir (Nuruddin Muhammad Saleem) succeeded to the throne. He was not an apostate like his father but most of the practices, which were the legacy of Akbar's rule, continued to be in vogue. The reverential prostration to the emperor was one of them.

There were many eminent theologians who opposed Akbar's creed and suffered torture and humiliation. But it was Shaikh Ahmad Faruqi of Sarhind 1564-1624 A.C. (971-1034 A.H) popularly known as Mujaddid Alf-e-Sami (the reformer of the second millennium). He was a revolutionary theologian and an adherent of pristine teachings of Islam. He was averse to the degenerated teachings of the Sufism. He rejected the theory of Wahdatul Wajud [وحدة الوجود] or Pantheism as it was against the Islamic concept of pristine monotheism. Since pantheism is the bedrock of mysticism, so he had to face the ire of the Sufis.

To counter their opposition he expounded the theory of Wahdatush Shahud (Unity of perception

or (ہمہ از اوست), which was not in collision with the Islamic concept of monotheism. Shaikh Sarhindi challenged the cult of Din-e-Ilahi. He wrote letters to the eminent court nobles and asked them to rise against the imperial arrogance to save the prestige of Islam. Some of the courtiers complained to Jahangir against him. The Shaikh was summoned to the court. As he did not prostrate to the king, he was imprisoned at the Gwalior fort. The Shaikh was not an ordinary scholar. Most of the court nobles held him in great reverence. Even Prince Khurram, who later became the Emperor of India with the title of 'Shah Jahan', was a devotee of the Shaikh. But he dared not to intercede with his father for the release of the Shaikh. He however, dispatched an emissary, Qazi Abdul Rahman, to the Shaikh in Gwalior prison, to request him to offer prostration to the emperor under duress. This, the prince argued, would enable him to beg for mercy of the emperor. The Qazi had taken many volumes of the great jurists who had justified such an act in order to save one's life. In such a case, they had opined, the oppressed one will not be a sinner and will not incur divine punishment. The Shaikh rejected the plea and said that Islam does not allow to prostrate any one other than Allah, the Almighty. The Qazi had to return empty handed. For three years the Shaikh remained imprisoned. This period of incarceration was a blessing for the inmates of the prison. Shaikh's saintly presence, his preaching and teaching transformed even the hardcore criminals in to devout and righteous individuals. When Jahangir received the report of this metamorphosis in the prison, he realised his folly. The Shaikh was released and was brought to the imperial court. The Emperor treated him kindly and he was ordered to join the imperial army for spiritual and moral regeneration of the soldiers.

Jahangir died in 1627 A.C. and Shah Jahan was proclaimed the new emperor. He was a pious and righteous man. The practice of offering prostration to the emperor was abrogated and the remnant practices of Din-e-Ilahi were also discarded. Thus Akbar's cult died a natural death. When Shah Jahan shifted his capital from Agra to Delhi, he celebrated the occasion on a grand scale. Peacock throne was placed in Diwan-e-Khas of the Red Fort. All the nobles, princes, courtiers, military commanders, theologians, scholars and court poets were present. The Emperor adorned the Peacock throne. After a while, he descended the throne and fell on the floor prostrating to Allah Almighty. Then, rising from the prostration, he addressed the courtiers in a voice quivering with emotions, humility and submission writ large on his face, "Bear witness, O my courtiers that I profess that I am a humble slave of Allah Almighty". This was the result of the untiring efforts of the theologians particularly Shaikh Ahmad Faruqi Sarhindi that the Mughal dynasty again came in the fold of Islam. The Shaikh died in 1624 A.C. He left bright and indelible imprints of his boldness, steadfastness and adherence to the pristine teachings of the religion. He was undoubtedly the greatest reformer of his time, the renovator of the second millennium.

Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan, was the crown prince. He was a learned young prince and had close contacts with the Sufis, Sanyasis and scholars, both the Hindus and the Muslims. He was greatly influenced by the Hindu spiritual philosophy. He compiled a book 'Majmaul Bahrain' (The Confluence), wherein he had tried to bring out the proximity between the Hindu (Vedant) and the Muslim (Mystic) spiritual philosophy. He also translated the Upanishads into Persian under the title 'Sirr-e-Akbar (the Supreme Secret). He was more of a scholar than a ruler. Had he not been a prince who had to scramble

for the throne, he would have been a great exponent of the common spiritual heritage of India.

Shah Jahan was a devotee of Mian Mir, the renowned Sufi of that time. He took Dara Shikoh to him and the saint blessed the young prince (1).

Aurangzeb was the most capable and shrewd of all his brothers. He was also a scholar and had a highly refined literary taste. His letters bear testimony to his scholarship. The embellished style of his writing makes him a distinguished writer of his time. But he was intolerant and harsh towards the other communities. He was shrewd but not politically sagacious. He reversed the policy followed by his forefathers. Persecutions of the non-Muslims, demolition of their places of worship, imposition of Jizyah, were the steps that heralded the fall of the mighty Mughal Empire (2).

(1) Dara Shikoh, the eldest son and the crown prince, was very close to his father. He often prevailed upon the Emperor. Once Mullah Shah Budakhshani, a disciple of Mian Mir, who lived in Kashmir, recited the couplet

(پنجه در پنجه خدا دارم من چه پروای مصطفی دارم)

[I have direct access to God and don't care for Mustafa, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH)]. The Kashmiri theologians declared that the Mullah had committed blasphemy and was liable to be beheaded. The fatwa was forwarded to the emperor. Shah Jahan was willing to order Mullah's execution but Dara Shikoh interceded on his behalf and requested his father that the opinion of Hazrat Mian Mir may be sought in this case. Mian Mir said that Mullah Shah might have recited this verse in a fit of mystical reverie. He should not be taken seriously. Since Mian Mir was the patron saint and Shah Jahan venerated him, so the life of the mullah was spared.

(2) Aurangzeb had two alternatives before him, either to carry

As a matter of fact Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb represented the two extremes in the Mughal dynasty. Dara Shikoh symbolized liberalism while Aurangzeb signified conservatism and orthodoxy. These two opposite forces were fiercely active ever since Akbar promulgated his cult of Din-e-Ilahi. Jahangir and Shah Jahan did not favour or patronise that cult and it died a natural death. But with the emergence of Dara Shikoh and his close proximity with

on the liberal outlook of his predecessors or adopt stern methods. His conscience favored the latter course. In March 1659 A.D., he forbade the construction of new temples, in 1664 he prohibited the repair of old temples and five years later he issued a general order to the governors of all the provinces to demolish all the schools and temples of the infidels and put down their teachings and religions practices strongly. Famous Hindu places of worship suffered destruction, the temple of Somnath at Patan, Vishwanatha at Varanasi and Kesava Rai at Mathura. In 1668 A.D., Hindu religious fairs were forbidden and three years later an order was issued that the Muslims alone were to be appointed as the revenue collectors in the crowndom. Worst of all, in the year 1679 A.C., the hated Jizyah was imposed upon the non-believers after they had enjoyed exemption from it more than a century. The discriminating custom duty was raised to five percent for the Hindus in 1665, two years later it was abolished altogether for the Muslims till then paid @ 21/2 pc.

(India, Medieval History p-88)

The Mughal Empire fell as almost all empires fell because of its own inherent weakness. It literally went to pieces. But this process was greatly helped by a new consciousness of revolt among the Hindus, which was brought to a head by Aurangzeb's policy. But this religious Hindu nationalism of a kind had its roots even earlier than Aurangzeb's reign and it may be that it was partly because of this and other were the spearhead of this Hindu revival and the Mughal empire was finally overthrown by them. (Glimpses of World History p-316)

the Sanyasis and Sufis, the liberalism was again poised to register a comeback. Had Dara Shikoh succeeded to the Mughal throne, he was sure to follow the Sulh-e-Kul (peace with all) policy of his great grand father.

Aurangzeb on the other hand was the ideal of those who had opposed Akbar's extreme liberalism. They had inherited this aversion from their fore fathers who had seen the devastation caused by the imposition of that cult. Mujaddid Alf-e-Sani's disciples were active to foil the re-emergence of that liberalism. Aurangzeb was the disciple of Shaikh Muhammad Masum (the son of Mujaddid Alf-e-Sani).

However a shrewd politician and seasoned military commander as he was, he manoeuvred with alacrity and defeated Dara Shikoh, his elder brother and crown prince. After capturing the throne he treacherously killed his brothers who had aligned with him in the war of succession. He had already imprisoned his father at Agra.

No doubt there are historical evidences that he endowed *jagirs* to the temples, donated generously to the high priests of the temples and requested them to pray for his long life and prosperity and perpetuation of his empire. He valued merits in the appointments to the senior administrative positions. But he was intolerant and harsh towards his opponents. He was inflexible in his outlook. However, he was after all, a despot an autocrat like the other rulers. Like other emperors he was also a captive of imperial arrogance, an obdurate wayward, tolerating no dissent.

He got the Sikh guru Teg Bahadur beheaded because he was close to Dara Shikoh and had supported him in the war of succession. This reckless action had

devastating consequences. A sect of mystics and mendicants converted itself in to a belligerent community who inflicted mortal blows on the Mughals in Punjab.

When he made up his mind to invade Bijapur and Golkunda, he sought a fatwa from the Qazi of the imperial court. Qazi Shaikhul Islam, a pious and righteous theologian, bluntly told the emperor that it was not permissible to wage a war against a Muslim state. Aurangzeb ignored the edict and got a new fatwa from another scholar who submissively issued one to suit the ambitions of the Emperor. This shows how unscrupulous he was, and how the pious theologians had performed supreme jihad by declaring the truth in the face of the tyrant ruler. Aurangzeb's expedition to Deccan was a great folly. He spent 25 years there, far away from his capital and even died there. This long absence from Delhi sapped the roots of the empire (1). However in his personal life, Aurangzeb was an ideal person. He was an ascetic. Took nothing from the state treasury for his personal expenditures. He was an expert calligrapher and earned his

(1) Iqbal in his poetic composition Mathnavi Asrar-e-Khudi has narrated a similar story about a king (perhaps Aurangzeb). The king had an ambition to invade a country. He went to the great mystic Hazrat Mian Mir and sought his blessings. The saint kept quiet. All were eager to know what he would say in response to the emperor's request. Meanwhile, a devotee of the saint came and offered a coin as an oblation and submitted that it was from his lawful earning. The saint said "Give this silver coin to this king. He is a beggar in his royal robe. He rules over a vast land but still he is hungry of more lands and more territories. He has an eye on the table of others. His hunger for land has devastated the countries. His sword brings famine and pestilence, it has ruined the world. His majestic might is an enemy of humanity. Mankind is a caravan and he is a marauder. In his silly and foolish interpretation he calls his pillage and plunder a conquest.

livelihood by copying the text of the Quran and stitching caps. No doubt he maintained the pomp and splendour of the imperial court but discarded many wasteful ceremonies where money was spent lavishly just to display imperial grandeur. He also tried to reform the degenerate Indian society. He put a ban on Sati (burning of the Hindu widows on the pyre of their husbands). The unscrupulous persons donning the mantle of godmen attracted the masses. Aurangzeb punished such persons. Sarnad is the instance of his action; he was beheaded near the gate of the Jama Masjid. He also put a ban on the cultivation of bhang (Cannabis or Hashish). Consumption of wine and gambling was prohibited. The prostitutes were ordered to get married or leave the country. He appointed vigilance officers to ensure that the prohibitory laws were enforced effectively. He was a devout Muslim and offered his prayers regularly and on scheduled time. Once during a battle when it was the prayer time, he got down from his horse and stood up to offer the prayer in the battlefield amidst the shower of bullets. When Abdul Aziz, chief of Bulkh army, saw him offering prayer in the battlefield, he cried out that it would be disastrous to fight such a saintly person and requested for peace. Aurangzeb was a connoisseur of music but he removed all the musicians of the imperial court. When he died in 1707 A.C., at the age of 90, he left four rupees and two annas for his funeral, which he had saved out of his earnings from stitching caps. A saving of rupees three hundred and five that was a part of his earning from calligraphy, were given as per his will, to the poor.

His hunger for land causes massacre of his army and the army of his enemy. The hunger of a beggar (starving) kills him but the hunger of an emperor kills (destroys) nations and countries. Whoever draws his sword for other than Allah's cause, his

Aurangzeb's death was the end of the glory of Mughal dynasty. He was the sixth and the last of the great Mughal emperors. His successors were incompetent and bereft of political sagacity. The alienation of Rajputs had deprived the empire of its martial arm. It was indeed a great loss. Aurangzeb's weak successors had to pay dearly for his inexpediciencies. The erosion of power that had begun to manifest itself in the lifetime of the last great Mughal was now threatening the very existence of the grand empire.

With the emergence of hostile regional powers like the Sikhs, Jats, Marathas, Rohilas and above all the British East India Company, the traders turned rulers, India was slowly moving into the colonial trap. The defeat of Siraj-ud-Daula at Pillasy (1757), the defeat of the combined Indian forces at Buxur (1769) and the fall of Tipu Sultan (1799) sealed the fate of the Indian sub-continent. In 1803 A.C., Lord Lake entered Delhi, the capital of Mughal India. And, now the British were the virtual rulers of the country. Mughal King's rule was now confined within the four walls of Red Fort. He was a pensioner of the East India Company and petitioned to the Company officials to enhance his pension. When there was no positive response from the haughty and self-conceited white bureaucrats, the emperor of India, the successor to Akbar and Aurangzeb, had to send Raja Ram Mohan Roy of Bengal, to London as his attorney to plead his case before the Company directors. But an utter despair was his fate.

The Indian Muslims, who had been under a spell of being the ruling community of India, were in a state of

sword cleaves his own chest". Asrar-e-Khudi, caption 'Jihad for Conquest is Unlawful in Islam', Page 63-64 Kulliat Iqbal (Persian).

extreme despondency. The 18th and the 19th centuries were the years of turmoil and torment for them.

Shah Waliullah (1703-1762 A.C.) was the greatest Muslim scholar of the 18th century in India. His services to the Indian Muslims are of a unique significance. It was he who ushered in an era of a new awakening among the Muslims. His revolutionary ideology based on the pristine teachings of Islam, revived new hopes in the Muslim community. His greatest contribution was the translation of the Quran into Persian. It can be said to be one of the most fundamental work done by a Muslim scholar during the one thousand years of Islamic existence in India. He went to Arabia to perform Hajj and got in touch with the eminent scholars of Hadith to have a deeper insight in to Islamic learning. He was the contemporary of Shaikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab Of Najd (1703- 1792) who later launched his revolutionary and reformative movement of return to the pristine Islam. Both might have come into contact during his stay in Arabia but there is no documentary evidence to support it.

On his return, he embarked on his mission of reform and regeneration, with a new fervor and vigour. He translated the Quran in 1735-36. A new dawn of Islamic awakening was heralded by the translation. Persian was the state language and was commonly spoken. Now every one, who was able to read and understand Persian, could have a direct access to the meaning of the Divine revelation. The monopoly of the conservative theologian, who believed that the Quran could not be translated in to any other language because no mortal was competent to comprehend the esoteric meanings of it, came to an end. They were furious and charged him with blasphemy. An attempt was also made on his life but he escaped. Shah Waliullah continued to express his radical views through

his speeches and writings. He analysed the causes of the decline of Muslim ascendancy in the country, and blamed the political system, economic exploitation of the farmers and the masses. He criticized the royalty, the nobility, the theologians and the Sufis for the deplorable state of affairs. He forwarded letters to the court nobles reminding them of their duty towards their nation and the country and urged them to take steps to reform and revitalize the decaying political system. He particularly contacted Nizamul Mulk, a very influential and astute noble of the empire. But his attempts to introduce reforms were frustrated by the royalty and those of vested interest. Nizamul Mulk was disappointed and had to leave Delhi. He went to Hyderabad.

The conditions were worsening day by day. Political anarchy, corruption and exploitation had taken the entire country in its grip. Social evils were rampant. Sikhs, Jats, Rohillas and Marathas had taken up arms against the Mughal Empire. Their plundering had ruined the population. There was no refuge from their pillage and onslaughts.

Mughal emperors were a plaything in the hands of their nobles. There was no hope of recovery or reform. Shah Waliullah had been passing through an ordeal. There was no one to come to his rescue. The pangs of a moribund system, the crumbling social structure, the morbid mentality of the ruling class, the mortal indifference of the spiritual luminaries, this somber scenario had been tormenting his soul. In his desperation he turned to Ahmad Shah Abdali and sought his intervention to restore peace and order in the country. The Afghan king came with his mighty army. The Marathas suffered a crushing defeat in 1761 and their dream of capturing power in Delhi was shattered (1). [see next page]

Shah Waliullah wanted to eliminate sectarian differences among the Muslims and unite them on the basis of pristine teachings of Islam. He himself was from among the Hanifis. His father Shah Abdul Rahim was an eminent scholar of his time and was one of the members of the board of theologians who had been assigned the task to compile "Fatwa-e-Alamgiri". (Comprehensive religious decrees based on the Hanafi jurisprudence.)

But Shah Waliullah was an erudite scholar and competent to sort out the propositions on the analogy and precedents enshrined in the volumes of Ahadiths. He did not confine himself to a particular school of jurisprudence as he himself was a jurist (Mujtahid). He was liberal in his approach and adhered only to the Quran and the precepts of the messenger of Allah (PBUH) and wanted the Muslims not to be rigid in their following of the sectarian jurisprudence. His epoch making book 'Hujjatullah-el-Baligha' is an encyclopedic work on various Islamic points. Here his dynamic approach and pragmatic views portray him as the greatest thinker of his time, and there is no denying the fact that the 18th century had not produced any other towering personality like him. He was next only to Shaikh Ahmad of Sarhind (Mujaddid Alf-e-Sani) who

(1) To some of the scholars it was unbecoming on the part of Shah Waliullah to seek the help from Abdali. Some consider it against the spirit of patriotism. But the fact is that he did not invite Abdali to capture India and establish his rule here. He only wanted to get the rebels punished who, taking advantage of the eroding authority of the Mughal rulers, had been indulging in reckless ravage and plundering and had created terrible conditions of disruption and disorder in the country.

Jadeed Hind Ke Secular Maimar (The secular builders of modern India) (Dr. Mujib Ashraf) p-127.

had died more than a hundred years ago. Like his predecessor he also fought against the social evils, upheld the truth even putting his life in jeopardy. But the Shaikh had the misfortune that there was no one to carry on his mission. With his passing away his mission also faded away. But the Shah had the blessings that his illustrious sons kept the standard of his mission flying. His erudite scholar son Shah Abdul Aziz was the true successor to his great father. Born in 1746 A.C., he adorned the seat of his father at the age of seventeen. The country was passing through a turbulent period. The Mughal Empire had virtually collapsed and the British were now the supreme political power. Indians, particularly the Muslims were groping in the dark. There was no ray of hope for them. Their hostility towards the East India Company, their hesitation to reconcile with the new educational and academic changes, the tornado of the Christian missionaries having full support of the colonial authorities, and the worst of all, the shattered economy had ruined them completely. Not only in Delhi, but everywhere in the sub-continent, the Muslims had been facing the same problems. The British had, already swallowed Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Mysore fell in 1799 when Tipu Sultan attained martyrdom fighting for his country. The colonial rulers' unsaturating hunger for more land by annexing Indian states or subjugating the native rulers through the Subsidiary System, had precipitated the crisis. Unlike the previous Muslim rulers the Turks, Afghanis and the Mughals, the British had not severed their links with their homeland. They had been ruling over India from London. It was for the first time in the Indian history that the country was being ruled through remote control. The company officials were appointed by the directors of East India Company in England. They obtained their orders in policy matters from them. They plundered the territories under their control and the looted wealth was sent to the

British Isles. Never the Turks, Pathans or the Mughals exported India's raw material to Central Asia or Afghanistan, their original homeland, to import it later in the form of manufactured items to earn exorbitant profits. This exploitation had shattered Indian industry. The craftsmen, the traders, the manufacturers, all were economically ruined. They could not easily get raw material because it was being exported to Europe. They could not sell their manufactured items in the bazaars because they could not compete the British traders who controlled the Indian markets. The foreign rulers levied heavy taxes to discourage Indian manufacturing industry. This plundering had exasperated all sections of the society and they had been seething with an uncontrollable passion of rebellion. Shah Abdul Aziz was a teacher and preacher, a socio-religious reformer. He had been closely watching the fast changing political contour of the country. He knew well that the Mughal Empire had lived up to its normal life and now it was destined to die a natural death. But he was not prepared to accept the European traders as the rightful rulers of India.

Apart from capturing political power, the British had unleashed the Christian missionaries to proselytize Indians. They challenged the scholars of other faiths, particularly the Muslims to polemical bouts. They cast aspersions on Islam and the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). Bible was translated into Urdu and other regional Indian languages and was being distributed gratis. The missionaries were particularly inducing the Muslim masses towards Christianity, as they knew that the Muslim being the people of the Book (Ahl-e-Kitab) like the Christians, had many things common in their belief. They venerate Christ and Mary. They recognize the Bible as one of the divinely revealed scriptures, so they could be easily seduced to embrace Trinity. Since the missionaries

represented the dominating political power, they could use their temporal clout also.

The Muslims were thus faced with formidable challenges, political as well as spiritual. They had been defeated in the political field. But they were stronger and invincible in the spiritual ambit. Muslim theologians were alive to this challenge. Shah Abdul Aziz's younger brothers Shah Abdul Qadir and Shah Rafiuddin, the illustrious sons of Shah Waliullah, translated the Quran into Urdu, yet another epoch making achievement. The Persian translation of the Quran by Shah Waliullah had provided a free access to the meaning of the Divine Scripture to the scholars and the literate. Now the Muslim masses had an opportunity to understand what the Quran means and what it demands from the believers. Translating the Quran into Urdu was the most effective strategy to counter the attacks by the missionaries. Now a comparative study of the Quran and the Bible was not confined to the scholars only but even a layman who could read Urdu, was able to find out the difference between the two scriptures; one declaring in clear and unambiguous terms that Allah is one. He is absolute and eternal, neither He begets nor He was begotten. There is no one equal to Him. The plain and simple monotheism rejects all the beliefs and theories of more than one God. Trinity could not overwhelm monotheism. The Muslims who had been misled by the unscrupulous Sufis and obscurantist theologians to call the saints (Aulia) besides Allah, or beseech Allah through the deceased saints, were now more conversant with the pristine teachings of Islam and the meanings of monotheism. Shah Abdul Aziz had universalised the teachings of Hadith. Himself the greatest scholar of the subject, he taught Hadith in his Madarsa. Students from every nook and corner of the sub-continent, from Central Asia, Afghanistan, Tibet, China and other

remote regions converged on him braving the hazards of the long journeys. Thousands of people attended his discourses. It was in fact a far-reaching policy based on prudence. He was aware of the fact that the so-called intellectuals, spiritual luminaries and the nobles of the Muslim community were nothing but deadwood. The gigantic problems faced by the community could only be solved by involving the masses. Spiritual regeneration was the first and the foremost stage of his multi-faceted strategy. Islamic renaissance as envisaged by his father, had to be materialized through mobilising the entire community. The enduring chaos of more than one century had a disastrous effect on the masses. A complete overhaul, spiritual and temperamental, was necessary to raise an army of disciplined and dedicated believers to challenge the colonial forces. He had revived the pristine spirit of Islam and the Muslims had awakened after a long slumber of negligence. Shah Abdul Aziz's nephew Shah Ismail, son of Shah Abdul Ghani (the youngest son of Shah Waliullah) was a prodigy, a versatile genius. He was an erudite scholar, a prolific writer, a great orator, a gallant soldier, a crusader against social and religious evils and an able military commander. He delivered his sermons in the market places, at the steps of Delhi's Jama Masjid and other places. He exhorted the people to adhere to the pristine teachings of Islam. He condemned heretic deeds and un-Islamic customs prevailing in the society. Celebrating death anniversaries of the saints, begging their mercy or invoking Allah's blessing through them, was un-Islamic and against the very spirit of the pristine monotheism of Islam. His book 'Taqwiatul Eiman' is the most important and the first in Urdu on this subject, which became the manifesto of the Wahabi movement. So great an orator he was that he held his audience spellbound. His preaching aroused strong feelings among the masses to return to the pristine teachings of Islam. This infuriated the

conservative circle of the degenerate Muslim society. The Sufis and theologians who were opposed to his reformatory mission petitioned to the Mughal king. Shah Ismail was summoned to the royal court. He was however, able to convince the king of the objectives of his mission. Now the antagonists approached the British resident of Delhi and clamoured against Shah Ismail. They told him that if he was allowed to carry on his campaign, it might create serious law and order problem in the city. The resident prohibited his public discourses. Shah Ismail went to the resident and gave a detailed account of his activities and the positive results the campaign had produced. Since there was nothing objectionable in his activities, the resident revoked his earlier order and Shah Ismail again embarked on his mission. So eager he was in the dissemination of the message of reform and spiritual regeneration that he even went to the locality of the prostitutes. As almost all women in the immoral profession were Muslims, he delivered a sermon where in he warned them of the divine punishment they were liable to undergo for their depravity. Then he gave a horrifying account of the eternal torment in the world hereafter. So forceful was his description and so awe inspiring was the picture he painted that all the women wept bitterly and some of them even collapsed. Shah Ismail then changed the course of his discourse and described the superiority of repentance. Don't be dismayed of Allah's mercy. He is Forgiver, Merciful and Beneficent. He will forgive all the sins if one turns to Him in repentance. Now so appealing and soothing was his preaching that all the prostitutes repented there and then and vowed not to tread the path of perversion again. The young ladies got married and the old ones took to manual labour to earn their livelihood.

Once he was invited to the royal court by the Mughal king. He put forward the condition that he will not

follow the customary practice of paying respect to the King but will greet him according to the Islamic way of salutation. The King conceded and he went to the royal court and delivered his sermon there.

Shah Muhammad Ishaq, the grand son of Shah Abdul Aziz was also an erudite scholar who adorned the seat of his grandfather when he passed away in 1823 A.C. Shah Abdul Aziz admiring the erudition and merits of his nephew and the grandson, happily recited the Quran verse i.e. (الحمد لله الذى وهب لى على الكبر اسمعيل واسحق)

(Praise be to the one who blessed me in my old age, with Ismail and Ishaq.)

Maulana Abdul Haie, son-in-law of Shah Abdul Aziz was also a reputed scholar. All these eminent theologians were the torchbearers of the revolutionary mission of Shah Waliullah.

When the British army entered Delhi in 1803 A.C., it was a formal proclamation of the end of the Mughal rule. The Muslims underwent a new mental torment. The fragile emotional link with the past glory that the Mughal rulers' existence in the Red Fort had been sustaining so far was now severed. Even the shrinking empire, which spread from 'Delhi to Palam' only, was now no more. Delhi the capital of India was still the seat of the Mughal emperors who once ruled the sub-continent. The East India Company had its headquarters at Calcutta and even after occupying the entire country, the capital, Delhi was not under their control, and they could not boast to be the rulers of India. But now the situation had changed altogether. The capital of India had been occupied by the enemy, the infidels, and with the fall of the capital, the whole country was deemed to have come under their occupation. The Muslim scholars were faced with the

question as to whether India was a country of the enemy (Darul Harb)? There were conflicting views on the point. Those having sympathy with the British argued that the new rulers had not interfered in the religious affairs of the Muslims. The Muslims were free to offer their congregational prayers in the mosques. Their *madarsas* had been functioning without any interference from the new rulers. Even the Mughal emperor had not been forced to abdicate. It was nothing but to circumvent the facts. Those who had an insight and understood the implications of the new dispensation, did not agree to it.

Shah Abdul Aziz was the most competent scholar to say a final word on this controversy. After considering the issue with circumspection, he issued the decree, defining the condition of Darul Harb, and leaving no doubt or ambiguity that India was no more a country of the Muslims (Darul Islam) after the political ascendancy of the Christians. This was the first ever *fatwa* against the colonial rule in India. The significance of this *fatwa* was that it gave an indirect call to the Indian Muslims to fight against the colonial occupation and get India liberated or migrate to any other independent Islamic country (1).

Shah Abdul Aziz's *fatwa* had made it absolutely clear that India was no more Darul Islam. In

(1) Hunter has reproduced the translation of the *fatwa* in his book "Our Indian Musalmans" as under:

When infidels get hold of a Musalman country and it becomes impossible for the Musalmans of the country and the people of the neighbouring districts to drive them away or retain reasonable hope of ever doing so, and no one is strong enough to seize upon the revenues of the country without the permission of the infidels and the Musalman inhabitants do no longer live so secure as before, such country is politically a country of the enemy. (Darul Harb, p-105)

many cities the Muslims abolished the congregational Friday prayer under the edict of the jurists. In Calcutta two prominent Muslim theologians Maulvi Muhammad Wajid Al Quzat Fazlur Rehman abstained from offering the Friday prayer.

These were the circumstances when the cry of Jihad (fight to liberate the homeland) rent the air. Shah Ismail had already been preparing himself for this mission. He had excelled himself in archery, sharp shooting, swimming and horsemanship. His forefathers were not soldiers but great scholars as he himself was. But he was a born soldier, a warrior, a revolutionary to the core and also an ardent socio-religious reformer. He had done the spadework for the movement later to be known as the 'Wahabi Movement'. Syed Ahmad of Rai Bareilly (1786-1831) belonged to a family of Sufis. He was not a scholar. He came to Delhi and took Bai'at at the land of Shah Abdul Aziz. But he was not interested in the studies and went to Tonk and joined as a soldier. The Nawab held him in esteem and valued his advice. He was more a spiritual guide than an army officer. He was against the British sovereignty over the state. But when the Nawab accepted the terms and signed an agreement with the British

In another *fatwa* Maulana Abdul Haie, candidly declared Calcutta (Bengal) as the country of enemy.

The empire of the Christians from Calcutta to Delhi and the countries adjacent to Hindustan proper (North west provinces) are the country of enemy (Darul Harb) for idolatry (*Kufr and Shirk*) is everywhere current and no recourse is made to our Holy Law. Whenever such circumstances exist in a country, the country is a Darul Harb. It is too long here to specify all conditions but the opinion of all lawyers agree in this that Calcutta and its dependencies are the country of the enemy. (p-105)

surrendering his independence, Syed Ahmad left service and went to Delhi in 1816. There he started his mission of spiritual guidance. Maulana Abdul Haie, son-in-law of Shah Abdul Aziz, and erudite scholar took Bai'at at his hand. Then Shah Ismail and Shah Muhammad Ishaq nephew and grandson of Shah Abdul Aziz respectively took Bai'at and were initiated into his order. The initiation of these eminent scholars and the scions of the illustrious family of Shah Wahiallah came as a great surprise to all. People were amazed to know that these towering personalities had taken the Bai'at (بیعت) of a person far inferior to them. However, Syed Ahmad was now recognised as the most eminent spiritual leader in Delhi. People came to him to be initiated into his order. But, he was not an orator. Shah Ismail and Maulana Abdul Haie accompanied him on his tours. They compiled his exhortations into a volume in Persian entitled "Sirat-e-Mustaqeem" (The right path).

In his preaching Syed Ahmad called upon the people to adhere to the pristine teachings of Islam and discard all the un-Islamic practices and beliefs. Shah Abdul Aziz who was old and had turned blind also blessed Syed Ahmad and gave him his cloak. He initiated the people into his order taking Bai-at in all four popular Sufi orders viz. Naqsh Bandi, Chishti Qadri and Suhrawardi. Since all these orders had adopted many corrupt practices having no sanctity of the Shariah, so Syed Ahmad, after taking Bai'at, initiated his disciples into his new order namely 'Muhammadia Order'. The disciples, under this order, were required to make a vow that they will strictly abide by the commandments of the Shariah and will not follow anything not proven by the Quran and the Hadith. The oath taken under the last or the 5th order would save the disciples from all the evil practices. That had crept in the four mystical orders.

It is however, intriguing that those who had embarked upon a mission of reforming the Muslim society, had no moral courage to reject the degenerated mystical orders, and insist on the adherence to the enjoins of Quran and the Hadith only. But in those days mysticism was the identity of all the Muslim divines and scholars. The masses would not recognise the superiority of an eminent theologian if he had not aligned himself with a popular mystical order.

So firm was the grip of the mysticism upon the masses that when Mujadehid-Alf-e-Sani (1564-1624/971-1034) discarded the theory of Wahdatul Wujud (pantheism) as being un-Islamic he could not reject it outright and had to expound an alternative theory of Wahdatul Shuhid (unity of perception). Similarly Shah Ismail and Syed Ahmad could not discard the degenerated mystical orders bluntly and had to initiate their disciples into a new 'Muhammadia order'. It was in fact an indirect rejection of the mysticism (1).

Syed Ahmad had now a following of thousands of the disciples. He toured many districts in U.P. and elsewhere. He himself and Shah Ismail and Maulvi Abdul Haie delivered sermons and called the audience to abide by the Shariah and shun heretic deeds and practices.

Hajj: Now Syed Ahmad announced his intention to go to Arabia to perform the Hajj. Shah Ismail and Maulana

(1) Iqbal writes in one of his letters:

"For centuries there had been fierce struggle for supremacy between the Sufis and the Ulema. The Sufis ultimately triumphed and the Ulema had to concede their defeat. Now even prominent Ulema cannot gain creditability and popularity unless they take Bia'at in any one of the Sufis orders". (Kulliat Khutut-e-Iqbal)

Abdul Haie were also to accompany him. Hundreds of men and women also gathered to go with him for Hajj. In 1821 A.C., he travelled to Calcutta en-route to Arabia with an entourage of 400 disciples. He passed through Allahabad, Banaras, Patna, Bhagalpur and Monghyr. The itinerant spiritual guide was warmly received in every town and thousands of people took Bai'at. The nobles and the rich, offered money and gifts (including horses, swords and guns), to him. Sumptuous foods were served and garments were also presented to them. Making short stay at many places, the caravan reached Calcutta. The arrival of such a large group of people in the city made many people apprehensive, particularly those who knew Shah Ismail and his vigorous campaign against the social and religious evils in the Muslim society. His remarkable book 'Taqwiatul Eiman' had caused a tremor in the domain of mysticism. The protagonists of the Sufis and the retrogressive theologians lodged a complaint with the police that such a large number of people who roam in the bazaars, with arms on their person, should be a cause of concern to the authorities. Since Shah Ismail, Maulvi Abdul-Haie and Syed Ahmad all were busy in the dissemination of the message of reform and regeneration based on the enjoins of the Quran and the Hadith, the authorities had no reason to interfere in the purely religious activities. After staying there for three months, Syed Ahmad and his party embarked for Arabia. They performed Hajj in 1823 A.C. (1237 A.H.) and stayed in Hijaz for 8 months. Shah Ismail and Maulvi Abdul Haie rendered the book 'Sirat-e-Mustaqeem' in to Arabic to apprise the Arabs of the aims and objectives of their reformative movement. Maulana Abdul Haie gave lessons in Mishkat (an authentic collection of Ahadith) in the Harem and Shah Ismail delivered his lectures on the subjects of "Hajjatullahil Bulgha" (حجته الله البالغه) (the most remarkable book authored by his illustrious grand

father Shah Waliullah)

Those were the days when Arabia had witnessed the turbulent reformative movement of Imam Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab of Najd. The entire Arab society was in turmoil. The great revolutionary reformer had out rightly rejected all heretical beliefs, deeds and practices. He vehemently denounced the practice of going to the tombs of the saints to beg for worldly and spiritual blessings. The society was infested with all such evil practices, the vested interest, therefore, joined hands to fight against him. He was turned out from his hometown. Attempts were made on his life. Arabia at that time was under Turkish administration and the Turkish authorities were also not sympathetic to him. The Imam died in 1792. The administration had taken stringent measures to curb the Wahabi movement. The pious and righteous devotees were persecuted. They were not allowed to preach and spread the message of the pristine faith. When Shah Ismail, Syed Ahmad and Maulana Abdul Haie were in Madinah, one of their zealot companions was arrested by the authorities, on the charge of being a Wahabi as he had sharply criticized the un-Islamic practices prevailing in the society. He was produced before the Qazi. Maulana Abdul Haie pleaded on his behalf and convinced the Qazi that there was nothing malafide in his preaching. The man therefore was released. There was a deep-rooted conspiracy to incriminate Shah Ismail and Maulana Abdul Haie, the two scholars who were the motivating force behind Syed Ahmad's mission. But both were eminent theologians and it was not easy to inculcate them. The caravan returned home in 1824 A.C. Shah Abdul Aziz died in 1823 and his grand son Shah Muhammad Ishaq had succeeded him as the teacher and spiritual guide.

Syed Ahmad and Shah Ismail and Maulana Abdul

Haie, now planned to embark upon their mission of fighting the colonial occupation of India. The Jihad movement was therefore launched. A campaign was started to mobilise the masses. Syed Ahmad's disciples took the message of Jihad to every nook and corner of the sub-continent. Maulana Wilayat Ali and his younger brother Inayat Ali were deputed to Deccan (South) and Bengal. The two scions of the illustrious family of Patna landlords successfully completed their mission. Bengal particularly became the most important centre for the recruitment of the Mujahideen. It was because that Bengal was the first to come under the colonial rule. The British exploitation had ruined the peasantry and other weaker sections of the society. Since the British had usurped the power from the Muslims, they were the main target of the company's repression. The peasants were deprived of their lands and a new agrarian system was introduced under which the landlords were given such rights that were bound to have devastating effects on the poor peasants who had already been groaning under the vindictive laws of the company.

So when the emissaries of Syed Ahmad gave a call to join the liberation movement (*Jihad*), the hard pressed and persecuted peasantry responded with fervour and religious enthusiasm. The British were responsible for their plight and economic ruin so when they were called to wage a holy war against the white infidels, they readily offered themselves to be recruited as the Mujahideen. The preachers assured them that when India was liberated they would get back their forfeited lands and the ownership rights as well. This was the greatest attraction for the poor peasants. The end of the colonial occupation, restoration of the previous political set up and restitution of their lands had fascinated them. The recruitment and training centre was at Sadiqpur in Patna. After a brief orientation and a

short span of training, the recruits were transported to the front.

The liberation movement (*Jihad*) had been launched, now the question was, where to establish the headquarters of the movement. It was obvious that such a movement could not be conducted from the British controlled areas. The native rulers, who had accepted the British over lordship, also could not have allowed anti-British activities in their states. This was the most intricate problem. Some *Pathan* disciples offered their territory, the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) for the purpose. This area was not under the British control and was ruled by the tribal chieftains who enjoyed an independent or at least autonomous political status in their principalities. Since the region was abutting on the Punjab, the Sikh who had established a mighty empire under Ranjit Singh in Punjab, considered it as their sphere of influence. They plundered the localities, tortured the inhabitants and recovered heavy fines from the tribal chiefs. The weak and defenseless chiefs had to suffer humiliation at the hands of the Sikh army. People had to flee their houses to save themselves from the brute soldiers. There was a deep discontent against these incursions and pillage. But there was no one to come to their rescue. Therefore, when Syed Ahmad announced his intention to wage a war against the British and was in search of a suitable and strategically safe place, the *Pathans* offered their land, hoping their own emancipation.

This was the best-suited offer for the Wahabis. The region was predominantly inhabited by the Muslims, and was surrounded by the provinces having majority of the Muslim population such as Kashmir, Kabul, Sindh etc. it was an ideal place to mobilize the local tribal to join the Jihad movement. The tribal warriors, with their religious

zeal, could prove to be the best soldiers. Military assistance could also be sought from Kabul and other regional rulers of Afghanistan. Contacts could also be established with the countries of Central Asia and Iran (1).

(1) Addressing a gathering of the Frontier people, Syed Ahmad, once said, "I was in search of a safe place where I could lead the Muslims and plan for Jihad. Despite the vastness I could not find a place in India where migration was possible. There were many people who advised me to stay in India and embark on Jihad. They promised all help, money and material, but I did not agree, because Jihad was to be organised and waged according to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH)".

A number of Frontier people were also present there. They said that their country was best suited for the purpose. If you go and encamp there, lakhs of Muslims will join you. Particularly because Ranjit Singh of Lahore had been persecuting the Muslims of the region and they had been suffering badly at their hands.

I agreed to their proposal and decided to emigrate to this land to mobilize the Muslims for Jihad.

(Syed Ahmad Shaheed, p-264)

EMIGRATION

In 1826 A.C., Syed Ahmad along with his companions and followers, left Bareilly. Enroute to his destination the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) he had a halt at Gwalior and then at Tonk. In Gwalior Raja Hindu Rau, brother-in-law of the ailing Raja Daulat Rau, who had been looking after the affairs of the state on behalf of the Raja, received him warmly. Raja Hindu Rau was an admirer of Syed Ahmad and appreciated his activities. The caravan was treated as the state guest. Raja Daulat Rau also sent for Syed Ahmad and sought his blessings for his recovery. Raja Hindu Rau offered cash and valuable gifts and garments to Syed Ahmad.

In Tonk, Nawab Amir Khan gave him a standing ovation. The caravan encamped at a place later known as 'Mohalla Qafila'. Nawab Amir Khan was a devotee of Syed Ahmad. He treated him lavishly and offered money, arms, horses and other gifts to him and to his associates. Passing through Sindh and Qandhar, he arrived in Kabul. Wherever he went, people received him with religious fervour and joined his caravan. So immense was the public response to his mission that the ruler of Qandhar was frightened that the overwhelming mass convergence might turn against him. So, he sent a secret message to Syed Ahmad to leave the town at the earliest. Syed Ahmad tried to allay his apprehension but he was extremely upset and insisted on his immediate departure. Thousands of people were willing to follow him but he politely turned down their requests and advised them to stay back. Crossing the Khyber Pass he reached Peshawar and then moved to Naushera.

The movement of Syed Ahmad and the mass support he got in the tribal areas, alarmed the Sikhs. This

territory, abutting Punjab, was in fact the sphere of influence of Lahore Darbar. The Sikhs enjoyed a privileged position among the local chiefs. They were the overlords of the region. They intervened in their feuds by siding one ruler or supporting the other, and then demanded heavy price for their support. The arrival of Syed Ahmad and the Mujahidin was an exhilarating event for the masses. They hoped that with the help of the Mujahidin they would be able to repulse the Sikh marauders. The Sikhs were alarmed at the mass movement of the Mujahidin in the tribal areas. A contingent of 10,000 soldiers under General Budh Singh, cousin of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was sent to keep a watch on the movement of the Mujahidin. Syed Ahmad was not yet settled in the new land when he was confronted with a mighty Sikh army. In December 1826 A.C., the Sikhs clashed with the Mujahidin at Akora near Naushera. The Sikh army could not withstand the zeal and the spiritual fervour of Mujahidin and Budh Singh had to retreat with heavy casualties (500 dead).

The battle of Akora opened a new chapter in the history of the tribal people. The defeat of the Sikh army not only stunned Lahore Darbar but also the tribal chiefs, who were not happy at the turn of the events. However the masses hailed the victory and Syed Ahmad was now their Messiah, the emancipator.

In January 1827, Syed Ahmad was proclaimed as the Imam and Amirul Mominin (commander of the faithful) at a meeting attended by the theologians and the tribal chiefs. Now he got the powers to enforce the Sharait laws, declare war against the enemy and provide spiritual guidance to all. The *Ulema* and the chiefs took Bai'at at his hand and vowed to abide by the enjoins of the Shariah and to follow him. As the commander of the faithful his

name was recited in the Friday sermons. Some of the tribal chiefs, who could not attend the meeting, sent letters recognizing him as their Imam and taking oath of allegiance. Yar Muhammad Khan and his three brothers, who jointly ruled Peshawar, were also among them.

Earlier, after defeating the Sikh army at Akora, the Mujahidin launched a night attack on the Sikh army at Hazru, and captured large quantity of arms and other material.

The Sikhs were enraged and planned a massive attack on the Mujahidin. Peshawar rulers Yar Muhammad and his brothers were not happy that a mendicant coming from India, had subjugated them. They were deadly against him but the mass support and the respect he had earned, had made them desperate. Yar Muhammad established secret links with Lahore Darbar and sent reports of Syed Ahmad's movements to Ranjit Singh. Daily meal to Syed Ahmad was served from the personal kitchen of Yar Muhammad Khan. He poisoned the food and Syed Ahmad fell seriously ill after consuming it.

The Sikh army had encamped at Shidu to attack the Mujahidin. Shah Ismail commander-in-chief of the Mujahidin also deployed his soldiers. Yar Muhammad also came with his army, to fight the Sikhs, along with the Mujahidin. Syed Ahmad's condition was deteriorating but he insisted to go to the battlefield. Shah Ismail and his other companions helped him to ride his horse.

Yar Muhammad had hatched a conspiracy with the Sikhs, so when the battle raged, he withdrew from the battlefield. This treacherous move stunned the Mujahidin. The Sikhs taking advantage of their bewilderment, launched a massive attack and inflicted a crushing defeat

on them. Some six thousand Mujahidin lost their lives. They were dispersed and had to retreat.

The report of the defeat elated Lahore Darbar. Guns boomed in salute. The city wore a festive look with illumination and firework. Yar Muhammad's perfidious activities had shattered the hopes of the Wahabis. He began to harass the caravan of the recruits coming from India. He ordered the brokers of Peshawar, not to transact any business with the Mujahidin and not to exchange money for their gold coins.

Some of the companions of Syed Ahmad advised him to take punitive action against Yar Muhammad, but he was reluctant because Yar Muhammad and his brothers had taken their baiat and he did not want to take drastic action against them as it might push them to the Sikhs openly.

Some other tribal chiefs like Khade Khan of Hund, and Payenda Khan of Amb, were also behaving in a hostile way. But it would not have been politically expedient to take military action against those who had vowed to abide by the Shariah and remain loyal to the Imam.

Yar Muhammad's hostile attitude was causing serious difficulties in the smooth flow of money and men from India. The caravans were detained for weeks, money and material looted and the volunteers were humiliated. Maulvi Mahbub Ali, a scholar from Delhi, with a group of recruits, was also harassed and detained by the soldiers of the Peshawar ruler. He conveyed a message to Syed Ahmad that he should first fight these hypocrites and then embark on his mission of *Jihad* against the infidels (1).

(1) Maulvi Mahbub Ali was so bitter that he clashed with

Demise of Maulvi Abdul Haie:

Maulvi Abdul Haie was an erudite scholar. It was he and Shah Ismail, who had projected Syed Ahmad as the leader of the Wahabi movement. It was their baiat that introduced him as the great spiritual leader in Delhi. It was Maulvi Abdul Haie who along with Shah Ismail, compiled the book 'Sirat-e-Mustaqeem' in Persian and then translated it in to Arabic. It furbished his spiritual image among the

Syed Ahmad. He objected to his assuming the office of Imam, he criticised him for his fine dress and delicious food, while the other Mujahidin wore coarse clothes and took very simple food. He even declared that there were no activities of Jihad at the camp. He seduced his companions to leave the camp and return home.

Maulvi Muhammad Hasan tried to convince him that Jihad (striving) and Qital (fighting) were two separate terms. Qital takes place when there was a confrontation with the enemy, while Jihad was a constant phenomenon. The Mujahidin were engaged in preaching and upholding the Truth. Their presence in the region had aroused the feelings of piety and righteousness. People were turning to their religion and the signs of reform and regeneration in the society were manifest everywhere. Maulvi Mahbub Ali was however, not convinced. He and Hakim Ashraf Ali, along with their companions returned to Delhi. They propagated against Syed Ahmad and his movement. The atmosphere was vitiated to such an extent that people withheld their contributions. Recruitment campaign was also badly affected. The Mujahidin had to experience serious difficulties. With the discontinuation of the flow of money from India they had to face starvation. They consumed fodder, ate tree leaves and suffered from serious intestinal diseases. Many died of starvation and dysentery. But they were dedicated and pious Mujahidin. They suffered, starved, and died a miserable death but no one deserted the camp. Their devotion and commitment to the noble cause was exemplary.

scholars. Maulvi Abdul Haie was a man of deep insight and was the chief advisor to Syed Ahmad. But he was an old and ailing person and had been suffering from piles. The hardships of long journey, the vagaries of the hilly climate, miserable conditions of living, and lack of medical care resulted in deterioration of his health. But he was a dedicated man. He never uttered a word of complaint and was always loyal to his mission and to his Imam. When he was on his deathbed, Syed Ahmad came as usual, to see him. He was experiencing acute pain. He requested Syed Ahmad to put his foot on his chest, as it would give him relief. Syed Ahmad put his hand on his chest. He died after some time. It was on 24 Feb. 1828.

Baiat Shariat:

Syed Ahmad had taken the Bai'at of jihad from the tribal people. His real mission was to reform and regenerate the Muslim society. Shah Ismail had strived hard to eradicate social evils. Syed Ahmad also wanted to fight against the un-Islamic practices in the tribal society. The society presented a living scenario of the pre-Islamic Arab social life. They had no regard for any moral and human value. They had no compunction in betraying their near and dear ones. The marauders were always ready to strike anywhere if it brought handsome booty to them.

The women were the worst sufferers. They had no right to property, no share in the inheritance of their

Syed Ahmad despatched letters to his supporters and sympathisers in India explaining the facts and also the detailed description of the plight of the Mujahidin after the discontinuation of the contributions from India. However Shah Muhammad Ishaque and Maulvi Muhammad Yaqub succeeded in their efforts to dispel the misgivings and money again began to be remitted to the Mujahidin camp.

parents. The widows were not allowed to remarry. They were considered as part of the inheritance and distributed among the male inheritors. The nobles and the tribal chiefs married more than four wives. Heavy amount of money was demanded to marry a daughter. If the money was not paid, the girl was not allowed to leave the house of her parents even after the marriage had been solemnized. To meet the huge demands of their in-laws, the youths had either to borrow money or to leave for far off urban areas to earn and pay the debts. The girls had to wait long years hoping to go to the house of their husbands. Hair turned grey, advancing age wrinkled their faces but there was no one to come to their deliverance.

The mullahs had a firm hold upon the masses but they did not bother to guide them to the right path. In fact they themselves were an astrayed lot and needed someone to guide them. They were sycophants, greedy, and lacking moral courage. They issued *fatwas* to appease the tribal chiefs and to justify their misdeeds. They had even assumed the divine power of forgiving the sins of the dead. At a ceremony called *Isqat* (Dropping of the sins) a volume of the Quran and a purse containing money was circulated among a group of mullahs, from one's hand to the others. In the last the Quran and the money was handed over to these mullahs and it was believed that the sins of the deceased had now been dropped (forgiven).

Syed Ahmad always exhorted the tribal chiefs to adhere to the Shariah and ensure that their people also adhered to the enjoins of the Shariah and discarded the un-Islamic social customs. He could not concentrate on the social reforms due to his pre-occupation with military confrontation.

However, he was now determined to take

immediate steps in this respect, as the objectives of the Jihad could not have been achieved without spiritual regeneration and social reforms. A degenerate society could not produce ideal soldiers to fight in the cause of Allah. So a grand concourse was held at Panjtar on 6th February 1829 A.C.(1st Shaban 1244 A.H.) in which two thousand prominent theologians from all parts of the Frontier region and an identical number of their students and disciples participated. All the tribal chiefs personally attended the gathering. Thousands of the tribal were also present.

Delivering his sermon in the convention, Syed Ahmad, reminded the audience of their obligations towards their religion. He exhorted them to observe the laws of Shariah, eschew social and moral evils and ensure that all were leading a life as enjoined by Allah and His Messenger (PBUH).

Turning to Fateh Khan, chief of Panjtar, he said in unequivocal terms, "Abide by the Code of Shariah, otherwise, there will be no bond of friendship between you and us".

The theologians also emphasized the need of social reform and adherence to the pristine teachings of Islam. They all took bai'at at the hand of Syed Ahmad that they will follow the enjoins of Shariah. The Ulema also issued a fatwa that after taking the bai'at of Shariah, whoever disobeyed the orders of the Imam, will be a sinner and fighting against him will be lawful.

Now, Syed Ahmad's mission got a new impetus. The overwhelming support and an avowed tribal multitude was with him. He had a mighty army of 80,000 soldiers.

Under the new dispensation, he appointed Maulvi Syed Muhammad Hibban as the Chief Qazi and Maulvi Muhammad Outbuddin, the chief of the accountability department. Qazis were also appointed in the different tribal towns. Collectors to recover *Zakat* and collect *Ushr* (Tithe) were also posted. This heralded a new ecclesiastical set up, but it was also the beginning of a tragic turn in the annals of the Wahabi movement.

The collection of *Ushr* was the most difficult task. The farmers, the nobles and the tribal chiefs, all resented this collection. The Mullahs, who had been collecting the *Ushr* earlier, now had been deprived of their privilege. This was their main source of subsistence. They were, therefore, in the forefront to oppose the collection of *Ushr* by the Mujahidin.

The punishment awarded for non-payment of *Ushr* added fuel to the fire. A tribal chief was punished for default. This humiliation infuriated him and he joined the camp of the antagonists of Syed Ahmad.

Khade Khan was engaged in open hostilities. A military expedition was sent. Khade Khan was killed in the operation and Hund was taken over by the Mujahidin. Amb was also occupied by the forces of Syed Ahmad. When the Mujahidin stormed to capture Zaida, its chief sought the help of the Sikhs. The Sikh commander sent his cavalry. The Mujahidin suffered heavy losses and their commander, Maulvi Ahmad Ali, nephew of Syed Ahmad, was killed during the encounter.

The killing of Khade Khan of Hund, enraged Yar Muhammad and he advanced with his Durrani soldiers. When Syed Ahmad came to know of the movement of the Durrani army at Utman Zai, he consulted the trib

Ulemas. They unanimously declared that Yar Muhammad had revolted against the Imam and fighting against him was lawful under the Code of Shariah. Syed Ahmad directed Shah Ismail to confront the Durrani army. Yar Muhammad had six cannons and a large army. Shah Ismail with a group of Mujahidin, launched a night attack and captured all the six cannons. This altered the balance of power. Now the Durrani army was not in a dominating position. Yar Muhammad was seriously wounded during the fight. He was rushed to Peshawar, where he died. The Zaida War (Sept. 1829 A.C.) was another watershed in the annals of the Wahabi movement. It also proved the calibre of Shah Ismail as a military commander. Capturing cannons of the Durrani was a stupendous achievement. With a handful of Mujahidin, he defeated the mighty Durrani army led by Yar Muhammad himself. The Mujahidin collected the war spoils: one elephant, sixty camels, countless horses, and a large quantity of arms and ammunition, dry fruits, cauldrons and tents. The documents recovered from the pavilion of Yar Muhammad were checked. There was a letter from Ranjit Singh wherein Yar Muhammad was directed to launch an attack on the Mujahidin. Syed Ahmad and his soldiers be driven out of the country as early as possible, and the control of Hund (occupied by the Mujahidin) be restored to the descendents of Khade Khan. If these orders were not complied with, he will himself advance with his army.

Ranjit Singh was very much disturbed at the rising power of the Mujahidin. The Frontier territory known as the sphere of influence of the Sikhs, was no more under his control. The loss of his suzerainty was naturally tormenting his mind.

General Ventura in a letter to Syed Ahmad, had written that "prior to your arrival, these territories were

under the control of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the tribal chiefs paid tribute to him. After your advent they have become rebels. You please advise them to be loyal to the Maharaja and also explain the purpose of your presence in this region”.

In his reply Syed Ahmad wrote —“your assertion that the country belongs to Khalsa Ji (Ranjit Singh) is absolutely unfounded. The land from the east to the west belongs to Allah. As you are subordinate to your ruler, similarly we are subservant to our Lord and have to carry out His commands, and call all the people to Islam. Those who embrace Islam are our brethren. You are among the people of the Book and can better understand our call. This is a call for you and for your master as well. If you accept it your country will remain with you, otherwise we will perform Jihad”.

This letter was dispatched through Maulvi Khairuddin who had a detailed dialogue with General Ventura. He informed him that the Yusuf Zai tribals had approached Syed Ahmad and told him of the plundering and high handedness of the Sikhs in their territories. They had earnestly requested him to come here to save them from the repression. They had submitted that there was no Amir under whose leadership they could perform *Jihad* against the enemy.

Ranjit Singh wanted peace with the Wahabis. He deputed his minister Hakim Azizuddin, Raja Wazir Singh and prince Sher Singh to contact Syed Ahmad. Ranjit Singh offered him vast territory on the left bank of the Indus river with an annual revenue recovery of Rs. 900, 000 /-, provided he would not expand his control beyond that territory.

But Syed Ahmad rejected the offer saying that he had no territorial ambitions and conquest was not his mission.

Syed Ahmad had many a time explained that he did not want to conquer any country or capture anybody's territory. His only mission was to fight against repression and persecution.

After the night raid (snipe) on Hazur where Sikhs suffered immense loss of property, general Budh Singh wrote a harsh letter to Syed Ahmad. He castigated him for launching a night attack. He challenged him that if he was hankering for martyrdom he should come openly to fight in the battlefield. To launch a sudden attack in the darkness of night and to plunder the traders was not an act of gallantry. (However, the Mujahidin had not taken part in this attack and it was the plundering by the Frontier people.)

Syed Ahmad, in his reply to Budh Singh wrote-- "Allah, the Almighty knows well that I have no personal ambitions. I never harboured such temptations nor did I utter a single word to express such desire. I am a soldier in the cause of Allah and will do every thing within my power and competence to serve the religion of Muhammad (PBUH). As long as my head rests on my shoulders this craze will persist.

If my Lord wants me that I should dash single handed, all alone to the battlefield, by Allah, I will do so without any hesitation.

I do not boast of my valour nor I believe in an ostentatious display of it, nor I want to establish an empire.

To prove my words. I place it on record that if any Sikh amongst the nobles and feudal lords, embrace the religion of Muhammad (PBUH), I shall fervently acclaim his heroic deed and earnestly wish for the progress and prosperity of his fief."

Such explicit expressions must have made the Sikhs aware of the mission and the objectives of Syed Ahmad. But they wanted to see the Mujahidin either tamed or driven out of the Frontier areas.

The rejection of Ranjit Singh's offer by Syed Ahmad, was an indirect hint of confrontation. Lahore Darbar being snubbed turned to the Durrani and prevailed upon them to launch an attack on the Mujahidin.

The Battle of Mayar, 1830: Yar Muhammad was killed in the battle of Zaida and his brother Sultan Muhammad Khan was now the ruler of Peshawar. The members of his family particularly his mother always pestered and cursed him that he had not avenged the death of his brother and was afraid of a *Faqir* (Mendicant).

Some of the tribal chiefs were also agitated over the killing of Khade Khan and Yar Muhammad. They argued that Syed Ahmad will eliminate all the tribal chiefs one by one. They were afraid of him and the Mujahidin. Sultan Muhammad Khan was once a devotee of Syed Ahmad and was reluctant to challenge him. But the other tribal chiefs had been inciting him. So, hesitatingly, he, at last, decided to launch an attack on the Wahabis. Ahmad Khan Kamal Zai, a tribal chief, who was punished by the Wahabis for non-payment of *Ushr*, and had turned against Syed Ahmad, also joined hands with the Durrani.

With an army of 12,000 men and six cannons, Sultan Muhammad Khan marched to the battlefield. The Wahabis had only 3,000 Mujahidin, but no cannon. The battle took place at Mayar in May 1830 A.C. Demonstrating their exemplary valour, the Wahabis captured all the cannons of the enemy, and after a fierce battle defeated the Durrani. Sultan Muhammad Khan fled the battlefield and took refuge in his fortress in Peshawar. Syed Ahmad now moved to Peshawar and took over the town. Sultan Muhammad Khan through a tribal noble Arbab Faizullah Khan, contacted Syed Ahmad and begged for peace and gave a solemn pledge that he would remain loyal to him.

The companions of Syed Ahmad were averse to any deal with the Durrani. They knew that they were treacherous in their nature and will betray again. Seth Budh Ram, a rich trader of Peshawar approached Syed Ahmad and advised him not to hand over the control of Peshawar to the Durrani. He offered to provide all that was needed to reinforce the Mujahidin army. Prominent scholars and the theologians of the town also opined that it would be against the political expediency to restore the control of Peshawar to the Durrani.

Arbab Behram Khan, a tribal noble and close associate of Syed Ahmad, submitted that if he was nominated as the new ruler of the town, he would raise a permanent contingent of 4,000 cavalry men at the state expenses, to be a part of the Mujahidin force.

But Syed Ahmad had made up his mind to reinstate Sultan Muhammad Khan as the ruler. He said that conquest was not his mission. He neither wanted to capture Peshawar nor Kabul. His sole objective was to strive for

the cause of Allah. He wanted to restore peace and harmony among the Muslims.

So, he handed over the control of the city to Sultan Muhammad Khan. However, he appointed the Qazis and other functionaries to enforce the laws of Shariah in the state.

Peshawar was the most important town of the Frontier region. Its revenue income, at that time, was estimated to be more than one million rupees per annum. Its fruit out turn and the strategic situation gave it an extraordinary fame and importance. Peshawar's fall to the Mujahidin was one of the most important events in the annals of the Wahabi movement. However, restoration of its control to the Durrani was a controversial decision. The scholars still debate the issue as it turned out to be a devastating blow to the Wahabis.

Those opposed to the decision, point out that it gave a safe opportunity to the Durrani to hatch conspiracies against the Wahabis which culminated in the carnage. Hundreds of the innocent Wahabis were butchered by Sultan Muhammad Khan and his tribal associates.

Those who support Syed Ahmad's step, argue that if the city was not handed over back to the Durrani, they would not have allowed the Wahabis to sit at ease. Constant confrontation and clashes would have paralysed the Wahabi activities in the region. Moreover, Kabul was also under the rule of the Durrani clans. The Durrani of Peshawar would have turned to their cousins for military assistance and the entire region would have been engulfed by the flames of bloody battles.

After taking over the control of Peshawar, Sultan Muhammad Khan was determined to hit back. A deep-rooted conspiracy was hatched for the purpose. The theologians of Peshawar issued a *Fatwa* where, it was declared that:

- * Syed Ahmad was an infidel and an enemy of our faith.
- * His real purpose was to grab our lands in the name of religion.
- * Earlier he was a soldier in the Indian army and now his masters (The British) had deputed him to be a spy in our country and cause unrest.

This *fatwa* had been in circulation among the tribals. Sultan Muhammad Khan had handed over a copy of the *fatwa* to Syed Ahmad, when he met him in Peshawar.

The enforcement of the Shariah Code had agitated many tribal chiefs. They were hell bent on opposing it. Some of them refused to pay *Ushr* (Tithe).

The Khan of Bajora invited Shah Ismail to his town to introduce the laws of Shariah. Shah Ismail wanted to go to Bajora through Swat. But Inayat Khan, chief of Aladand, incited the tribals that Shah Ismail would launch an attack on Swat. Shah Ismail tried his best to convince him of his bonafide but he refused him permission to cross his territory.

The tribals who had earlier hailed the promulgation of Shariah Code in their country, had now turned deadly against the Wahabi functionaries deputed to enforce the Code. These officials (Mujahidin) had resorted to coercion and repression. They were harsh and rude in their behaviour. In a fit of displaying their newly acquired authority, they awarded harsh punishment for minor offences. People were flogged in the market place in full

view of the on lookers. There was no defence, no appeal, no reprieve, against this instant justice.

However, it was not the fault of those petty officials to whom immense powers had been delegated to punish the offenders. They behaved like alien rulers and knew no mercy and compassion. No reasoning was allowed before them. There was no one to redress the grievances of the people. These functionaries were strangers to the region and their brute behaviour completely alienated the tribals from the Wahabis, and they rather turned hostile. Syed Ahmad and his senior companions and advisors had no knowledge of what had been going on under their dispensation. There was no proper intelligence or vigilance network to keep them informed. The Wahabi state covered vast territories from Khyber Pass to Amb, a large army and a size able revenue guaranteed its clout. The Wahabis had pushed back the Sikhs and now they themselves enjoyed the overlordship in the region. Ranjit Singh was a sagacious ruler. He knew that the people dedicated to a mission could not be repulsed or crushed. He held Syed Ahmad in high esteem and always spoke well of him and wanted to reconcile with him. (1)

(1) One, Amir Khan in the company of captain Sultan Muhammad, had a chance to visit Lahore Darbar. A letter from Syed Ahmad addressed to Ranjit Singh was read out in the royal court by Hakim Azizuddin, the minister. The letter read as under: -

“We have not come to conquer your country nor we want to harm your prestige, life or position, nor we want to fight with you. We only demand that you should help us in our fight against the enemy. After defeating the enemy, by resorting to *Jihad*, we will hand over your country to you. If you don't agree with our proposal we will have no option but to fight against you also”.

Sultan Muhammad Khan was covertly busy in consolidating his power to strike a mortal blow on the Wahabis. Syed Ahmad had appointed Maulvi Mazhar Ali as the Qazi of Peshawar. Disturbing news of the mischief were pouring in. The tribal nobles, mullahs and the hardcore adherents of the tribal customs had joined hand against the new dispensation. Sultan Muhammad was encouraging the dissipative elements. His family still lamented and mourned the killing of Yar Muhammad.

After hearing the contents of the letter Ranjit Singh remarked: "We have not seen or heard of such a courageous, bold and determined person in our times.

(Sarghuzusht Mujahidin, p-123)

Maulvi Najmuddin, who had been inciting and motivating the Muslim soldiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army to join the Mujahidin, was arrested and produced before Ranjit Singh. He narrated the event as under:

I visited the Sikh encampment twice. I preached and exhorted the Muslim soldiers to desert the Sikh army and join the Mujahidin rank. They were willing to join us. In the meanwhile, I was arrested and sent to Lahore. The Maharaja summoned me to his court. I was in fetters. The Maharaja ordered to unfetter me. He then said to me, "We have heard much of the marksmanship of the Mujahidin of Khalifa Saheb. Demonstrate your skill before us." So I fired some shots. He was very much pleased and asked me to join his army. I said, "We have come here for *Jihad* and not for employment. We cannot accept the offer." The Maharaja gave me a horse, two Banarasi scarfs and fifty rupees and directed his guards to escort me wherever I wanted to go.

Maulvi Najmuddin was escorted to the Attock by the Sikh soldiers. He went to Panjtar and handed over the presents and the money given by Ranjit Singh, to Shaikh Wali Muhammad, saying that it was the property of Allah and be

The indiscreet behaviour of some of the officials was adding fuel to the fire. The central administration seemed to be unaware of the seething sentiments against their functionaries.

Arbab Faizullah Khan, a righteous tribal noble, who had been used as a mediator by Sultan Muhammad Khan to establish contacts with Syed Ahmad, after his defeat in the battle of Mayar, and who had caused the agreement reached between the confronting parties, was very much upset at the perfidious activities of the Durrani rulers. He informed Maulvi Mazhar Ali, Qazi of Peshawar. Before forwarding his report to the headquarters, he wanted to investigate the matter to find out the facts. In the meanwhile, he was summoned to the court of Sultan Muhammad Khan, where a number of theologians of the town were also present. They were discussing the killing of Yar Muhammad. The Mullahs asked Maulvi Mazhar Ali that why Yar Muhammad was killed. He replied that he had moved with his army to avenge the killing of Khade Khan, who had rebelled against the Imam (Syed Ahmad). Sultan Muhammad Khan and the Mullahs charged that Khade Khan and Yar Muhammad were killed despite the fact that they had taken the bai'at of the Imam.

A detailed report of all these happenings was forwarded to Syed Ahmad. Shah Ismail sent a comprehensive reply of all the objections raised by Sultan Muhammad and his associates.

While the central leaders were busy in drafting letters refuting the charges of the Durrani, the tribal conspirators were finalising their course of action. It was

deposited in the Baitul Mal.

(Sarghuzusht Mujahidin, p-50, Gulam Rasul Mehr)

decided that on a particular date, all the Wahabi officials be assassinated at their place of posting. Carnage was to begin to a simultaneous beating of drums from every town. In the meanwhile, one Abdul Aziz came to Panjtar to deliver an urgent message from Syed Muhammad Asghar, Imam of Masjid Dikhara, that he had come to know that the Khans of Sima had hatched a conspiracy that all the officials of Syed Ahmad posted at different places to collect *Ushr* and enforce Shariat laws, be done to death by a sudden strike. Syed Ahmad refused to believe the report and said that it was an attempt to create distrust between us. Abdul Aziz went back disappointed.

Syed Muhammad Asghar, again conveyed his message to Syed Ahmad that his report was based on facts and that the Mujahidin and the officials be recalled immediately to the headquarters. Any delay in this matter will be disastrous.

But Syed Ahmad again pooh-poohed the report and said that "the Khans of Sima were our friends and we should not suspect any evil on their part." He advised the messenger not to be worried about the rumours.

When the messenger went back and informed Syed Muhammad Asghar of Syed Ahmad's reaction, the Imam broke down and said in utter despair, "Take it from me, the worst was going to happen within a couple of days."

On a dark night of November 1830, Imamuddin of Bombay, came to Panjtar. Syed Ahmad was in fast sleep. He requested the guards to awake him. When Syed Ahmad came out, he informed him that the Durranis had assassinated Maulvi Mazhar Ali and Arbab Faizullah Khan, and all the ghazis staying in Peshawar had also been done to death.

Syed Ahmad immediately sent for Shah Ismail and Maulvi Wali Muhammad of Phalit and apprised them of the ghastly happening. It was decided that messengers be sent immediately to all the ghazis posted anywhere to return to Panjtar.

But, Maulvi Wali Muhammad opined that it would not be proper to rush the emissaries at night. They will be dispatched in the morning. Thus they failed to realise the gravity of the situation. When in the morning the emissaries were sent, they were not apprised of the full facts and the impending danger. They were simply asked to convey the orders to all concerned to return to Panjtar.

The conspirators had planted their men at Panjtar to keep an eye on the activities of the Wahabis. Nasrullah Khan of Garhi Aman Zai, was one of them. The news of the assassination of the ghazis in Peshawar, and the orders of immediate return to all the ghazis, were the burning topic in the town. Nasrullah Khan immediately left Panjtar and in every town, he passed through, alerted the conspirators to execute their plan without delay, else the Wahabis will manage to escape.

The ghazis were completely in the dark about the doom that was looming large upon them. They were under the impression that they were summoned for an expedition. So they were in a complacent mood, busy in paying farewell visits to their friends and acquaintances. Had they been taken into confidence, they could have taken steps to defend themselves or evolved a joint strategy to confront the situation. The result was that most of them were caught unaware and mercilessly killed. Some of them tried to escape and some even challenged the assassins but could not face the mob. Most of them were either offering the *Isha* (night) prayer or were killed while

asleep. A number of them did not try to escape or defend themselves saying that martyrdoms was their foremost desire.

Maulvi Syed Jafar Ali Naqvi, in his memoirs *Manzuratus Suada* (منظورة السعداء) reports that the assailants while killing the sleeping ghazis, hysterically cried, "Get up and order for prayer, come and collect *Ushr*."

Hundreds of the innocent Wahabis, who had dedicated their lives to glorify the name of their Lord, who were the most devoted and pious amongst the Muslims and had migrated to that far off land to kindle the lamp of the pristine faith, who had sacrificed their personal comforts their family life and their relatives, were ruthlessly butchered: what was their fault? The only charge against them was that they ordered virtue and forbade evil.

There was no charge of corruption or immortality against them. Their virtues were vices in the eyes of their enemies. The diabolical reaction of their endeavour to enforce the code of Shariah, shattered all the hopes of Syed Ahmad, and the euphoria of a powerful state based on the norms of the Islamic Shariah dashed to the ground. But who was responsible for the failure. It was he and his advisors, his officials and functionaries who failed to react promptly to the disturbing reports of an imminent strike against the Wahabis. The functionaries in their zeal to enforce Shariah, forgot the basic fact that reforms and regeneration could not be enforced overnight. Their reckless behaviour precipitated the crisis. The clashes and confrontations with the tribal chiefs were inevitable. The feudal lords rebelled and reacted violently when they apprehended that their authority was being eroded. They suffered defeat and their people hailed the new

dispensation based on Islamic rules of egalitarianism. The masses were happy, no one revolted against the new rulers, the Wahabis. The end of the feudal exploitation was a great relief to the people. The new rulers should have had taken steps to win the confidence of the masses. They should have had given some reprieve to reconcile themselves with the new dispensation. Old habits die hard. Their tribal customs, which had become their mores, could not have been discarded instantly. The need of the hour was preaching, persuasion, inculcation and indoctrination to make them amenable to the changes. Divine code is not stringent and harsh. Allah burdens not a man beyond his scope. But the amelioration campaign was strident not discreet and moderate. They wanted to reform the degenerate society by force and not by persuasion. The paranoia had overtaken them. They used excessive force, which invariably boomerangs.

A missionary must not be harsh and short tempered. The Quran admires the compassion, tolerance and leniency of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) to his followers and exhorts him to take them into confidence.

فبما رحمة من الله لنت لهم، ولو كنت فظاً غليظ القلب
لا نفضوا من حولك، فا عف عنهم واستغفر لهم و شاورهم
في الامر. فاذا عزممت فتوكل على الله ان الله يحب المتوكلين
(ال عمران ١٥٩)

It was by the mercy of Allah that thou wast lenient with them (O Muhammad), for if thou hast been stern and fierce of heart, they would have dispersed from round about thee. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs. And when thou art resolved, then put thy trust in Allah. So Allah loveth those who put their trust in Him (3.159).

(Tr, Marmaduke Pickthal)

Everywhere in the Quran, we find a particular emphasis on leniency and compassion. When Allah ordained Musa (Moses) to go to Pharoah, the worst transgressor, he and his brother Harun (Aron) were also enjoined upon to behave in a decent manner and speak to him politely:

اذ هبا الى فرعون انه طغى فقلوا له قولا لينا
لعله يتذكر او يخشى (طه)
(٢٣، ٢٤)

Go both of you to Pharoah he has transgressed, and speak to him mildly; perhaps he may accept admonition or fear. (20-43,44)

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was enjoined upon in the Quran to call the people towards Allah with reason and preaching in an appealing manner (16-125):

ادع الى سبيل ربك بالحكمة والموعظة الحسنة
وجادلهم بالتى هي احسن (نحل)
(١١٥)

This is the Islamic code of conduct for a preacher. No wrangling, no harsh arguments, no aspersion, no strident tone. A missionary has first to reform himself. A ferocious man always in his tantrum can never be an ideal preacher or a missionary. Unfortunately Syed Ahmad's officials ignored the Islamic Code of Conduct. They were arrogant in their behaviour, reckless in the use of their authority, ruthless in awarding punishment. It was incumbent upon Syed Ahmad, Shah Ismail and their senior companions to ensure that the upstart functionaries did not misuse their authority and no undue coercion was resorted to enforce the code of the Shariah. A firm and persistent policy should have been evolved. Constant watch upon the conduct of the Qazis and the collectors was the foremost strategy particularly when they knew that under the duel

system of administration the tribal chiefs had been deprived of most of their powers, which they had openly resented and had been lying in wait to strike and retaliate.

However after the carnage Syed Ahmad was crest fallen, broken hearted and depressed. The Mujahidin were bewildered and flabbergasted. The loyal tribal chiefs and nobles were stunned and in great distress.

Syed Ahmad called a meeting of the nobles and the tribal chiefs. He constituted a commission to enquire into the causes of this massacre. He asked Syed Mian of Takhta band to go into the matter.

Most of those who were called to explain the reasons for this macabre act deposed that they were subjected to humiliation. Harsh punishment was awarded for minor offences. No leniency or mercy was shown to the people. One of the most resented actions was the collection of *Ushr*. The tribal chiefs, the nobles, the farmers and the local Mullahs were unanimous in opposing the imposition of *Ushr*. To hand over one tenth of their farm product or fruits to the collectors was an unbearable burden to them. The people of Swat had refused to pay *Ushr*, they threatened that if they were forced to pay *Ushr*, they will leave their town and migrate to some other region. However, *zakat* and *Ushr* are obligatory levies under the Shariah and no one was competent to exempt anyone eligible to pay these taxes.

Social degeneration also needed an urgent reform. Emancipation of the women was also a part of *Jihad*. When measures were introduced to improve the lot of the hapless weaker gender, the traditionalist and obscurantist protested violently. Had Syed Ahmad not taken the steps to reform the tribal society, the very purpose of the

Wahabi movement would have been defeated. Shah Ismail had brought the prostitutes of Delhi back into the moral fold of the society and they had vowed to lead a life of piety and chastity. The innocent tribal girls, the widows and the married ones too, were crushed under the un-Islamic savage tribal customs. Many socially conscious men and women had themselves appealed Syed Ahmad to come to their rescue. There was no justification for the resentment of the tribals. They were the captives of their vanity and brute social laws. Syed Ahmad had taken the right step to warn the tribals to marry their daughters within a stipulated period and no demand was to be made for their marriage. The widows were also to be allowed to remarry. If these orders had hit their vanity and if they were under the unfounded impression that their social values were being violated, then they were in gross perversion. These reformatory measures were absolutely necessary and even coercion was justified.

Thus, the only genuine grievances were the undue harsh punitive measures taken by some Qazis and the vigilance inspectors. The main culprits were the Mullahs and the Durrani. The latter were fighting for their feudal supremacy, while the former for the restoration of their offerings and oblations, particularly the *Ushr*, they had lost after the Imamate of Syed Ahmad. They had issued *fatwas* declaring Syed Ahmad an apostate and a British agent who had been sent to the region to spread dissipation and unrest. Sultan Muhammad Khan who had earlier produced this *fatwa* to Syed Ahmad as an alibi for his revolt against the Wahabis, was now freely circulating that very *fatwa*, to seduce the tribals against the Wahabis.

However, the massacre had disillusioned Syed Ahmad. He seemed to have lost all his interest in the movement. He wanted to leave Frontier and migrate to

Arabia. He discussed the issue with his senior companions but no one supported his views.

Arbab Bahram Khan sought his permission to launch an attack on the miscreants and crush the rebellion. The ghazis in large number were present and had the artillery also. No one could halt their advance. The pre-emptive expedition would restore confidence in the loyal tribals. But Syed Ahmad did not like further bloodshed and turned down the suggestion.

In a voice full of agony, he said, "For four years we have been trying to discipline these people on the moral and religious lines. We enforced Shariah code and collected *Ushr* with their consent. Now we entrust this controversy to our Lord who avenges and forgives. We migrated from our homeland, India, if these people are bent upon mischief we will migrate to somewhere else".

His voice was quivering with emotions, a deep sorrow had crushed his spirit, who could see the torment his soul had been experiencing. The commander of the faithful, the Amir of the believers had been betrayed by his own people. Those who had taken bai'at at his hand to remain loyal to him and to help him in the noble cause of upholding the Truth, had now turned perfidious and trampled all the norms of faith and fairness. Syed Ahmad was deeply engrossed in his sorrow. Mullah Sher, one of his loyal theologians from the Frontiers, opposed his idea of migration. He conceded that the miscreants had perpetrated major sin, but however, they were not non-believers. Shah Ismail also did not favour the idea of migration, as the work they had done in the region will go waste. Mullah Khairuddin was of the view that instead of depending upon the volunteers, paid soldiers may be recruited for *Jihad*. Syed Ahmad was not convinced of

opinions. He was firm in his resolve to migrate. He said he had developed a deep sense of disgust against them. He had been betrayed once and would not like to be deceived again.

The general discontent against the Mujahidin had not wavered Fatch Muhammad Khan chief of Panjtar, where Syed Ahmad had his head quarters. But after the carnage his behaviour had also changed. He was, in fact, afraid of the people of Sima Swat and the other tribal chiefs hostile to the Wahabis. He did not express his apprehensions but his attitude clearly reflected his inner feelings. Syed Ahmad had noticed the change in his behaviour. Sensing his vulnerability in the changed circumstances, he decided to leave Panjtar. He shifted his head quarters to Raj Duari. This township was owned jointly by a group of tribal chiefs and was not under the control of an individual.

Zabardast Khan of Muzaffarabad:

Zabardast Khan was the chief of Muzaffarabad. He was deposed by his cousin Najaf Khan with the help of the Sikhs. Zabardast Khan approached Syed Ahmad and sought his help to regain his power. The landlords and the Khans, whose lands on both sides of the road leading to Kashmir had been usurped by the Sikhs, also clamoured for help and came to Syed Ahmad. Zabardast Khan promised that if his control over Muzaffarabad was restored, he will help the Mujahidin with arms and ammunition to enable them to march on Kashmir.

The strategy was discussed at length. It was argued that if the lands of the local *zamindars* were restored, it would be of great advantage to the expedition to Kashmir.

Habibullah Khan, the chief of Garhi Habibullah Khan, was a big *zamindar* of the region. He had abandoned his Garhi and had been camping at the valley of Kaghan beyond Balakot.

Syed Ahmad directed Shah Ismail to move to Balakot with a contingent of the Mujahidin. Shah Ismail, in turn, asked Maulvi Khairuddin to advance to Balakot with his ghazis, he will also join them soon.

On 10 Feb. 1831 (27 Shaban 1246 A.H.), Maulvi Khairuddin moved out of his encampment at Bhogar Mong and arrived at Balakot.

On receiving the news of Maulvi Khairuddin's arrival, the local Khans sent a message that Najaf Khan was out of Muzaffarabad. He had gone somewhere along with the Sikh general Sher Singh. If he was willing, he could capture the town with a small posse of his ghazis. They will also join the expedition and after taking the control of Muzaffarabad, they will also accompany him to launch an attack on Kashmir.

Maulvi Khairuddin, as a disciplined soldier replied that he had been directed to march up to Balakot, he could not move forward. Shah Ismail was expected to arrive any time, they should wait for him. He also advised them to approach Amirul Mauminin (Syed Ahmad) and apprised him of their plan and strategy. But the Khans were pressing hard to capture Muzaffarabad before the return of Najaf Khan. They were reluctant to leave their families in Balakot and go to see Syed Ahmad. They were, however, eager to get the arms from the Mujahidin to fight the Sikhs themselves.

When Shah Ismail arrived in Kaghan, he sent a contingent of his soldiers to Muzaffarabad.

A deputation of the Kashmiri Muslims came to see Shah Ismail and requested him to invade Kashmir so that they could get rid of the Sikh repression. Shah Ismail conveyed the request of the Kashmiri Muslim to Syed Ahmad and also suggested that a vanguard of the Mujahidin was already in Muzaffarabad and the Kashmir valley was just at a stone's throw. If the Mujahidin marched to the valley the Kashmiri Muslims will also join them. Shah Ismail consulted the local Khans also. They argued that if the Mujahidin moved forward without a decisive battle with the Sikh, they (the Sikhs) will chastise them for having allowed the Mujahidin to march on Kashmir. So first defeat the Sikh army and then proceed forward. Their plea was convincing and the plan, to move to Kashmir, was deferred.

The Battle of Balakot :

Shah Ismail had sent a contingent of 300 ghazis to accompany Zabardast Khan to Muzaffarabad. They captured the palace and the market (Mandi) of the town. The Sikhs now controlled the cantonment and the main town (Garhi).

Having captured Muzaffarabad, Zabardast Khan secretly contacted the Sikhs and assured them of his loyalty provided his property was returned to him. Now he was using delaying tactics and was not willing to honour his promise he had made to the Mujahidin. Maulvi Khairuddin had been persistently asking for the promised assistance. The Sikh soldiers holding the Garhi, reported the capture of the town by the Mujahidin, to Lahore Darbar. Since the plan of Syed Ahmad to invade Kashmir

was an open secret, the Sikh were alarmed at the news of the fall of Muzaffarabad. Ranjit Singh ordered his son Sher Singh to stop Syed Ahmad from further advance. Kunwar Sher Singh along with his army moved towards Muzaffarabad. Habibullah Khan sent an urgent message to Syed Ahmad that the Sikh army was advancing to attack Balakot. He urged him to come immediately so that an effective defence strategy could be evolved.

On 17th April 1831 Syed Ahmad set out on his last journey from his encampment at Sichon to Balakot. Shah Ismail was also accompanying him. He (Shah Ismail) was sick and very weak. Tracking the hilly route was very much difficult for him. When he was tired and gasping, he would rest on a rock to take breath and exhorted his companions to be firm and steadfast in this ordeal. After taking rest for a while, he would proceed further.

On 25 April 1831 A.C., thirteen days before his martyrdom, Syed Ahmad dispatched a letter to Nawab Wazirud Duala, of Tonk. In this letter he dwelt at length on the circumstances prevailing in the Frontier region. He gave a detailed and agonizing account of the carnage, the betrayal of the tribal chiefs, and the treacherous attitude of the Durranis. Praising the sincerity and sympathy of the residents of Balakot, he informed him that they had promised to join him in Jihad.

“The army of the enemy was also encamping at some distance. If by the grace of Allah we defeated them the territory from the river Jhelum to the Kashmir valley will come under our control”.

Sher Singh had laid siege to Balakot. Najaf Khan sent a secret message to Syed Ahmad that he had brought the Sikh army to fight Zabardast Khan. He did not know

that he would be confronting with the Mujahidin. He advised him to retreat silently to the mountains to avoid a clash with the Sikhs. Sher Singh had 12000 soldiers. It would be very much difficult for him to encounter with such a mighty army. Najaf Khan, in the last, had suggested that if he was determined to fight, he should launch a night attack on the Sikhs encampment from the eastern side.

Syed Ahmad deliberated the situation at a meeting with the local nobles, in the light of the letter of Najaf Khan. Some of them were of the view that Najaf Khan's letter was a trick to oust the Mujahidin from Balakot. Some others were, however, expressed the opinion that Najaf Khan was sincere in his suggestions. A group among them supported the proposal of carrying a night raid on the Sikh encampment.

But Syed Ahmad was now aloof of all the steps and strategies. He seemed to be no more interested in any manoeuvring. He had resigned himself to the will of his Lord, as if he was now closer to the heavens than to the worldly surroundings. He was overwhelmed by a deep sense of despondency. When the Sikh laid the siege to Balakot, Syed Ahmad asked Mullah Lal Muhammad Qandhari whether it was feasible for him to launch a night attack on the Sikh encampment from the Sat Bana drain. Mullah was ready to comply with the orders but said that he would take Syed Ahmad with him. He refused to leave him there. He said, "I shall keep you with me. For the last many years I have been observing the behaviour of these people. They are hypocrites. These are the people who had invited the Sikhs". Syed Ahmad was moved by the observations of Lal Muhammad. In a pensive voice he said, "For such a long time we have been trying our best to mobilize them for the noble cause (the *Jihad*). We have had taken the best steps according to our wisdom and have

sacrificed our lives. We sent our emissaries to India, Kabul, Khurasan, Turkistan and elsewhere, who also did their best to call the people to the cause of Allah, delivered sermons and exhorted them to adhere to the pristine teachings of the Quran and the Hadith. No one came to help us but maligned us by levelling wild charges. Those who came forward to join us were these poor people. Perhaps that was the will of Allah.

Now our scribes were tired of drafting letters and we were also weary of dispatching them. All the exercise proved to be futile. Now it would be better that we recall our ghazis brethren from the guarding points.

On the fateful day of 6th May 1831 when the battle was yet to begin, Najaf Khan again sent a confidential message to Syed Ahmad that if he was able to fight the Sikh army, he should stay otherwise retreat to the mountains.

Thanking Najaf Khan for his sympathy, he wrote back that he had resigned himself to the will of his Lord and did not care much of the numerical strength of the enemy. Islamic prestige and honour did not permit him to retreat. Whatever had been predestined for them by Allah Almighty, will happen on this very battlefield of Balakot. (1).

(1) Mehr, commenting on the reaction of Syed Ahmad to the suggestion to retreat to the mountains, writes that if the ghazis had withdrawn from the battle, the Sikhs would have plundered the town and put the houses on fire and all sort of brutalities would have been allowed upon the hapless residents of Balakot. It would have brought disgrace to the Mujahidin and the *Jihad* movement would have lost its appeal and attraction. People would blame the Mujahidin for their plight. The people would ask Syed Ahmad that if he meant *Jihad*, then why did he retreat

The ill equipped 1,000 Mujahidin were no match to the well equipped 12,000 strong force of the Sikh gunmen (Banduqchis). The ghazis fought desperately and demonstrated their utmost valour but had to lose the battle.

Syed Ahmad, Shah Ismail, Arbab Behram Khan and many other prominent Wahabis fell fighting on the battlefield. It was on 6th May, 1831 A.C.

Out of the 1,000 Mujahidin, 300 attained martyrdom, the Sikh casualties were 700 dead. After the battle was over, the Sikh soldiers set the Balakot houses ablaze.

Sher Singh got the body of Syed Ahmad, traced by the ghazis taken prisoners, from the dead. It was a headless body. The head was also recovered later and the captive soldiers identified that it was the body of Syed Ahmad. Sher Singh covered the body with his mantle. He got the portrait of Syed Ahmad sketched by an expert artist and forwarded it to Ranjit Singh (1).

He gave Rs. 25/- to the captive soldiers to perform the last rites of their leader according to the Islamic practice. The body was buried on the bank of river

without a fight. Fighting would mean loss of lives for which the Mujahidin were always prepared and it was their foremost desire. On the other hand retreat would have generated myriads of complex problems. (Syed Ahmad Shaheed, p-756)

(1) Diwan Amar Nath in his Zafar Nama has reported that when Syed Ahmad's portrait was produced to the Maharaja, he admired his gallantry and remarked, "fragrance of valour emanates from his countenance", and spoke other words which reflected his deep regard for him.

(Mehr - Syed Ahmad Shaheed, p-808)

Kunhar. But some Nihang (Sikh) exhumed it in the night and threw it into the river (1).

There was a sense of jubilation at Lahore Darbar on the great victory at Balakot. The emissary, who had brought the news of the defeat of the Wahabis, was awarded with gold anklets and a shawl. Kunwar Sher Singh was felicitated by the Maharaja and was promised a new *Jagir* (fief) on his return to Lahore.

The Government of India also sent its message of congratulations to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, through its political agent.

The Mujahidin who returned from the battlefield to their encampment in the evening, knew nothing what had happened to Syed Ahmad and Shah Ismail. It was a pitched battle and the Mujahidin were lost in the midst of an army ten times more than their own strength. The defeated Wahabi soldiers were not demoralized. Triumph

(1) When Syed Ahmad's body was taken for burial, Mahal Singh and Lakhmi Singh discussed the matter. They said that if the body of Khalifa Saheb will remain buried here, Muslims in large number will turn up to visit the grave. They will blame the Sikhs for his murder and it will be a source of everlasting anger and contempt against us. So long as he was alive and active in this region, he had been a source of unrest and rebellion and now his grave would inspire the people to rise against us. Let the dead body be exhumed and thrown into the river. So they paid Rs. 25/- each to the two Nahangs for it. They exhumed the body, from the grave, at night and threw it into the river Kunhar. Since his head had been severed, the headless body floated up to the village Tilhatta. When the villagers noticed the body in the morning, they took it out and buried in the village. The head floated to Garhi Habibullah Khan and got entangled in a shrub on the bank. In the morning when an old woman went to the

and trounce were the part of the game. They had earlier inflicted crushing defeat upon the enemy. The Sikhs had also repulsed their attacks many a time. But it was the first retreat when they had lost contact with their *Amir* and the commander-in-chief.

Some of the Mujahidin stated that they had heard a voice during the battle that Amirul Mauminin (Syed Ahmad) had been seriously wounded and was taken away from the battlefield by a group of the local people. This

river, she saw the head and reported to the village chief. He came to the river. The head was taken out of water and was buried at the Garhi. Thus the head and the body were buried in separate graves. (Syed Ahmad Shaheed, p-804-805)

* Shah Ismail also attained martyrdom in the battle. It was reported by some Mujahidin that during the battle he approached a group of the Mujahidin soldiers. He was holding a gun in his hand and blood was oozing out of his wounded forehead. He enquired about Syed Ahmad. Someone pointed out towards a field where a pitched battle was going on. He rushed to the spot and was never seen again. His body was however, buried at Balakot.

* Arbab Bahram Khan was also martyred along with Syed Ahmad and Shah Ismail and was buried at Balakot. After six months, his nephew Muhammad Khan expressed his wish to bring the dead body of his uncle from Balakot to bury it at Tehkot. The old men of the village opposed the idea, as it would be improper to exhume the body after such a long time. They said, "Nothing but the bones (skeleton) would be there in the grave. But Muhammad Khan was sure that his uncle had sacrificed his life in the cause of Allah and he was a sincere follower of Syed Badshah (Syed Ahmad). Allah will not let his body decompose. So he took a wooden coffin and set out for Balakot with his forty companions. The residents of Balakot also did not favour the idea of exhuming the dead body after

statement gave solace to their tormented souls and as there was a lingering hope of the return of their mentor, it resulted in the genesis of the theory of reappearance of Syed Ahmad. Later this theory (Disappearance and reappearance) was shrewdly exploited by the leaders who led the Wahabi movement after the defeat of Balakot.

such a long time. But he was adamant. The body was exhumed and Lo! it was fresh and intact. Only the colour of the nails and the feet had changed. The body was brought to Tehkot and buried there.

(Syed Ahmad Shaheed, p-798)

THE THEORY OF DISAPPEARANCE AND REAPPEARANCE

Syed Ahmad fell fighting on the battle field of Balakot on 6-5-1831 A.C., along with Shah Ismail, Arhab Bahram Khan and many other prominent Mujahidins. No one saw him falling down as no one around him survived.

When the battle was over and the Mujahidin returned to their encampment, they noticed the disappearance of Syed Ahmad. No one knew what had happened to him and Shah Ismail.

However, some of the Mujahidin stated that they had heard a voice, during the battle, that Amirul Mauminin had been wounded and was taken away by a group of the local residents. This statement aroused the hope that he was alive. A party of the Mujahidin was dispatched to find out his whereabouts, but they returned clueless.

As the story of the mysterious voice had kindled a ray of hope that he was alive, taking advantage of the situation, some shrewd Wahabi leaders coined the theory of his reappearance. Legends and myths are the easiest way to fascinate the devotees of a mentor. The defeated Mujahidin, at that time, were in a state of shock. The defeat in the battle, where they lost three hundreds of their colleagues, had not demoralised them, but the trauma of disappearance of their chief pulverised them all. It had severed them from their moorings and some emotional support was necessary to buoy up their sinking spirits. The fallacy generated by the mysterious voice came to their

rescue and the theory of reappearance provided the succour.

Maulvi Muhammad Qasim of Panipat, was most vocal in the propagation of this theory. It is said that he used to take the new recruits to a mountain and told them that Syed Ahmad will reappear from the caves of this mountain. It is also said that he had installed an idol in one of the caves to conjure up the visitors. However, this does not appear to be true.

Maulana Wilayat Ali was the only towering personality after the martyrdom of Syed Ahmad and Shah Ismail. He had not taken part in the battle as he had been dispatched to the south (Deccan) to mobilise mass support for the Wahabi movement. He also took active interest in the propagation of the theory of reappearance. He even compiled treatises on the subject and asserted that Syed Ahmad had gone in to seclusion to have communion with God and would return to lead the faithful to a triumphant march against the enemy.

The belief of Imam *ghaib* (The disappeared mentor) was quite familiar and popular among the Muslims. When an erudite and reputed scholar of Wilayat Ali's stature, expounded the theory as a belief of the Wahabis, it soon became a creed of the movement.

The *ulema* of Sadiqpur (Wilayat Ali's family) who run the recruitment and training center for the volunteers (Mujahidin) indoctrinated the new recruits with the belief. They urged the people to join the *Jihad* movement before the reappearance of Amirul Mauminin.

So firm was the conviction of those *ulema* that Maulana Yahya Ali, the supervisor and chief of the

training centre, when he was convicted and lodged in the prison, he, as per the report of Maulvi Muhammad Jafar of Thanesar, used to recite the following couplet in his dungeon cell:

اتنا پیغام درد کا کہنا جب صبا کوئے یار میں گزریں
کون سی رات آپ آئیں گے دن بہت انتظار میں گزریں

(Convey my message O' Zephyre when you pass through the street of my beloved which night will you turn up, so many days have gone by in wait)

For more than half a century, the belief mystified the people. However, with the passage of time, they realised the fallacy of the belief and as Muhammad Jafar of Thanesar has written in his memoirs Twarikh-e-Ajiba, "Now that more than 60 years have elapsed, the belief of disappearance is gradually fading away from the memory of the people.

The Intriguing points:

The points which puzzle the mind are that how it had been possible to conceal or suppress the news of Syed Ahmad's death.

As the evidences reveal, after the battle, Sher Singh tried to get the body of Syed Ahmad identified. He asked the Mujahidin, who had been taken prisoners, to help identify the body and promised to release them if they co-operated. A headless body was shown to them, but they wanted the head also to be recovered to enable them identify it. When the head was also produced before Sher Singh, the captive Mujahidin identified that it was the body of Aminul Mauminin (Syed Ahmad). Sher Singh covered the body with his mantle. An artist was called to sketch the portrait of Syed Ahmad and it was sent to Ranjit

Singh. Sher Singh paid twenty-five rupees to the Mujahidin to perform the last rites according to the Islamic practice. A report said that the local residents had identified the body and buried it.

However, if the body was identified and funerals performed by the local residents or the Mujahidin, why did they not disclose the fact to the fellow Mujahidin or the local population? Was it possible to suppress such a stunning news particularly when the theory of reappearance was being propounded in every nook and corner of the country. Why did these eye witnesses remain silent and failed to falsify the myth that had gained currency thanks to the forceful propagation by the Wahabis.

Ranjit Singh ordered the great victory to be celebrated on a grand scale. Guns boomed in salute and the city of Amritsar was illuminated. The Governor General of India conveyed his felicitations through his political agent, to the Maharaja, "on the great victory and extermination of an individual who had been the cause of unrest in the region".

The death of Syed Ahmad could not have been a guarded secret when the government of India had sent its message of congratulations on the great victory and extermination of an individual (Syed Ahmad). There were millions of Muslims who were deadly against the Wahabis and they must have rejoiced the defeat and death vociferously. How then, was it possible that the myth of disappearance continued to captivate the mind and intellect of the learned people?

There is however, no denying the fact that the Wahabi leaders saved the movement from disintegration

by expounding the sophistry. Had it not been propagated promptly and fervently, the movement would have collapsed with large scale desertion of the Mujahidin and it would have been rather impossible to reconsolidate it. The apprehension was not hypothetical but a real one. The theory of Syed Ahmad's reappearance saved the movement and kept the Mujahidin united and active. With the passage of time, the Wahabis recovered from the trauma and reconciled themselves to the dictates of destiny. The Wahabi leaders who utilized the fascination generated by the theory, in attracting and luring the gullible masses to join the movement were equally sincere in their efforts. They exploited it to further the cause of the Wahabis i.e., to reconsolidate the movement to fight the British, the real enemy. There was no other way to save the movement from a sudden collapse consequent upon the martyrdom of Syed Ahmad and Shah Ismail, the Amir and the commander of the Mujahidin.

Had Shah Ismail survived, he could have saved the situation. He was the motivating spirit behind the movement and as a commander of the Mujahidin he had proved his calibre. He was the scion of the illustrious family of Shah Walliallah, the revolutionary scholar who heralded the intellectual renaissance in the 18th century. Shah Abdul Aziz his son and the greatest theologian of the 19th century, was the pioneer of the movement of *Jihad* against the alien rulers. Shah Ismail's personal charisma, his calibre and the family background would enable him to keep his flock together, and would have proved to be the best substitute.

However, the Wahabi movement, after the battle of Balakot, was a headless organisation. It was Wilayat Ali and his younger brother Inayat Ali who reconsolidated and resuscitated it. He (Wilayat Ali) has been criticized by

some writers for the role he played in the propagation of the theory of reappearance of Syed Ahmad. But that was a desperate attempt and strategy to save the movement from disintegration. He exploited it successfully. Keeping in view the magnitude of the crisis, Wilayat Ali cannot be blamed for making use of a harmless trick, a sophistry and fallacy. He was sincere in his action. (1)

(1) Wilayat Ali in particular has been criticized both by English and Indian critics for the propagation of the theory of reappearance of Syed Ahmad. The step has been depicted as motivated by desires to keep alive the ebbing fortune of the movement and to maintain his own leadership.

Actually the belief was a momentary emotional reaction. The services of Wilayat Ali to the movement were so substantial to be supported by such a weak help of doubtful advantage.

(Wahabi Movement in India, p-64)

BALAKOT AND AFTER

The Balakot debacle had a devastating effect on the Wahabis movement. The martyrdom of Syed Ahmad and Shah Ismail, had utterly demoralised the Mujahidin. A number of them deserted the camp and returned to their hometowns, as in the death of these two leaders, they saw the end of the movement. The seniors among the Mujahidin, however, tried hard to save the movement from disintegration. Since no one had seen Syed Ahmad falling on the battlefield, a theory of his disappearance was shrewdly coined which logically construed his reappearance. The very idea that Syed Ahmad was not dead, was a morale booster for the bewildered Mujahidin. The sinking boats of hope began to float again and the leaders of the broken hearted Wahabis succeeded in keeping the flock together.

Maulvi Wali Muhammad of Phalit, was chosen the new Amir. Syed Akbar Shah, chief of Sittama, who was the most sincere among the tribal chiefs, to Syed Ahmad, offered them a safe haven at Sittama.

In Delhi, the theoretical center of the Wahabis, the events of Balakot had cast a gloom over the supporters of the movement. The defeat was no doubt a pulverising blow but in no way it meant the end of the struggle. The illustrious family of Shah Waliullah was alive to the challenge. Shah Muhammad Ishaq, grandson and successor to Shah Abdul Aziz, started deliberations with his companions to reactivate the movement. Maulvi Nasiruddin, the grandson of Shah Rafiuddin was chosen the new Amir of the movement. In a sombre atmosphere

but with a determined will and the hearts always filled with an eternal hope of Divine blessings, the movement was raised again, at the Akbarabadi mosque.

Shah Muhammad Ishaq exhorted and motivated the audience to join the movement and Maulvi Nasiruddin, standing at the gate of the mosque, collected funds for the Mujahidin.

In 1835, Maulvi Nasiruddin, along with a group of his followers, moved out of Delhi. He did not go straight to Sittana but established his base in Sindh. The Mazari tribals of Sindh were at war with Sawan Mal, the governor of Multan. The Wahabis joined the Mazaris in their fight against Sawan Mal. But the cunning governor managed to win over a section of the Mazaris and the Wahabis suffered a defeat. Maulvi Nasiruddin then, moved to Baluchistan and established his camp at Lora Lai.

In Kabul, Dost Muhammad Khan had been fighting against the Sikhs and the British, who had joined hands to restore power to Shah Shuja. The beleaguered Amir of Kabul sought the help of the Wahabis. Maulvi Nasiruddin, with his one thousand Mujahidin marched towards Kabul in 1839. A contingent of 300 Mujahidin was sent to Ghazni to defend the city. But the British captured the town and a large number of Wahabi soldiers were killed in the battle. Maulvi Nasiruddin, however, managed to go to Sittana, the Wahabi base in the Frontier region. He was chosen the Amir of the Mujahidin, but soon after he breathed his last (1839).

The Wahabis were again without a dynamic leadership. In Delhi, Shah Muhammad Ishaq had migrated to Arabia and the coveted seat of theological instruction and guidance had been occupied by his most prominent and

competent student Mian Syed Nazir Husain.

The Wahabis were active in and outside British India but were badly in need of a leader who could consolidate their activities.

Syed Zaman Shah, chief of Balakot, was fighting the Sikhs, and wanted the help of the Wahabis. He invited Maulana Wilayat Ali to the Frontier, to head the Mujahidin. Wilayat Ali (1790-1852) was a prominent disciple of Syed Ahmad. He had taken *Bai'at* at his hand when he visited Lucknow and the former had been studying there. He belonged to the illustrious Sadiqpur family of Azimabad (Patna). When Syed Ahmad migrated to the Frontier, he deputed Wilayat Ali to the Deccan (South) to mobilise the masses to join the Wahabi movement. He went to Hyderabad and his preaching attracted many scholars and the nobles towards the movement. Nawab Mubarizud-Daula, brother of Nasirud-Daula, the Nizam of Deccan, also took baiat at his hand. It was here that the Wahabis established contacts with the native soldiers of the British army stationed in Hyderabad. Wilayat Ali left Hyderabad to tour the other South Indian towns. But his companions were busy in their work of mobilising mass support for the Wahabis. The contacts with the native soldiers were, however, detected. Maulvi Qutbuddin and other Wahabi activists managed to escape but Nawab Mubarizud-Daula was arrested and imprisoned at Golkunda Fort. The episode is known as the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case 1839. (1)

(1) The ramifications of the Hyderabad Conspiracy Case were wide and even spread to the South. During the investigation it had been found that there existed a network of Wahabi agents working at different civil and military stations in Madras and other places down South.

Hunter (Our Indian Musalmans, p-14)

After the defeat at Balakot, Wilayat Ali returned to Patna and was busy in his activities of call and guidance. His younger brother, Inayat Ali was also a dedicated activist of the Wahabi movement. He was a talented and untiring worker. He was the scion of a rich landlord's family, but after devoting himself to the cause of the movement he lived in Spartan simplicity. He was assigned the task to mobilise the Muslim peasantry in Bengal. The poor peasants and the indigo planters had been ruined consequent upon the enforcement of new agrarian laws under the company rule. Their lands had been usurped and they were deprived of their only source of subsistence. They had been seething with anger against the alien rulers. Inayat Ali gave them a new hope. They were assured that once the British were driven out of India, their lands would be restituted to them. The Bengali peasantry, therefore, overwhelmingly joined the *Jihad* movement and most of the volunteers to fight against the colonial rulers, came from Bengal (1).

The Wahabis had introduced an independent judicial system in the Bengal region. The Imams of the local mosques were assigned the responsibility to adjudicate upon the disputes of the village population. The Imam of the Central Mosque (Jama Masjid) acted as the appellate authority. Thus, the Muslims were persuaded

(1) Okinley writes that Inayat Ali had ignited an inflammatory passion against the British among his companions. The Mujahidin had a daily schedule of military parade. Sometimes it was held twice a day. Poetic compositions on the superiority of *Jihad* were recited during the parade. On Fridays, after the congregational prayers, sermons were delivered highlighting the bliss and comforts of the life in Paradise. The audience were exhorted to wait with patience and forbearance for the day when the promised hour of the conquest of British India would be heralded. Mehr (Sarguzasht-e-Mujahidin p-180)

not to seek justice from the British Judiciary.

In response to Zaman Shah's request, Wilayat Ali directed Inayat Ali to go to the Frontiers. Inayat Ali with his 2000 followers set out for NWFP. The Mujahidin were divided in to small groups who travelled intermittently to avoid notice and commotion. In 1843 A.C., he arrived in the Frontier region and was chosen the Amir of the Wahabis. His arrival reactivated the *Jihad* movement. The Sikhs were alarmed at the fresh movement of the Mujahidin. They had captured many forts (Garhis) of the tribal chiefs. Inayat Ali acting swiftly recaptured many forts and the towns from the Sikhs. Muzaffarabad, Balakot, and Garhi Habibullah were conquered by the Mujahidin. After recapturing these towns, he enforced Islamic laws and a strong and prosperous Wahabi state was established once again (1).

(1) (i) Giving an account of the Wahabi state Dr. Qayamuddin writes: A small republic with considerable income, a large army and a skeleton staff of the civil functionaries was established in the Hazara area. Apart from the areas under its direct control, it claimed the allegiance and received tribute from the chiefs of such areas as Jadaun, Tanawal, Nandhiar, Bhogar Mong, Pakhli, Dhautaur, Kunhar valley, Kundu, Muzaffarabad, and Alai etc. The amount of tribute received from these areas was over two lakh rupees. An equal amount was collected as *Ushr* (Tithe). Friendly relations had been established with the rulers of Afghanistan and some other chiefs.

(ii) The area under Syed Ahmad's control covered the territories of Sima (plains) area and Trawal. It was inhabited by four Pathan clans, Khundu Khel, Azar, Utman Zai and Anu Zai. The *Ushr* (in Kind) the Rabi crop of wheat and Barely was 7 lakh maunds; 3 lakhs from Pargana Sarhu, 2-3/4 from Pargana Gandaf and the rest from Mauza Khabal and others.

(Wahabi Movement in India, p-74)

In 1846, Wilayat Ali arrived there. Inayat Ali obediently abdicated himself from the position of Amir and Wilayat Ali was chosen the new Amir of the Mujahidin.

Wilayat Ali was the towering personality among the Wahabis. He had vigorously expounded the belief of the reappearance of Syed Ahmad. He compiled a number of treatises on the subject. It was a strategy to keep the morale of the Mujahidin high and not let the Wahabi supporters plunge into despair. No doubt it was a share fallacy and sophistry but Wilayat Ali and his close associates were convinced that it was the most effective emotional dose to save the sinking spirits (1).

After defeating the Sikhs the British had imposed heavy reparation upon them. When they failed to pay the ransom, the English annexed many areas of the Sikh empire. Kashmir was sold to Gulab Singh, the governor of Hazara and Kashmir for Rs. 75 lakhs. There were clashes between Gulab Singh and the Wahabis. He wanted to negotiate peace with the Wahabis, but they turned down his overtures. He then sought the help of the British (2).

Soon after taking over, Wilayat Ali was engaged in a military clash with the British in December 1846 (The battle of Doob Pass). The tribals, true to their nature, betrayed the Wahabis and they suffered a defeat.

Wilayat Ali and Inayat Ali were arrested and taken

(1) The leader's (Syed Ahmad) disappearance was a miracle, that indeed he was still alive and would manifest himself in due time at the head of the holy army and expel the English infidels from India. Hunter (Our Indian Musalmans, p-10)

(2) Lord Hardinge, Governor (1844-48) was convinced

to Lahore and brought to Patna. They were asked to execute bonds to stay in Patna for two years (1).

When the stipulated period was over, he again migrated to Swat. Inayat Ali had already left for Bengal, but he asked him to return to the NWFP. Some of the tribal chiefs, after the fall of Panjab, had aligned themselves with the British. The return of Wilayat Ali and Inayat Ali was resented by them. So they started harassing the Mujahidin and hampered the movement of their caravan. Since these tribal chiefs were the British protégé, an encounter with them would have resulted in a clash with the British. Inayat Ali was a man of dashing spirit and wanted a prompt strike against the erring chiefs. But Wilayat Ali did not like to precipitate a crisis by inviting a British retaliation. It led to a sharp difference between the two brothers. Inayat Ali defected from his elder brother, moved out of the Sittana camp along with his Bengali followers, and established his separate base (camp) at Mangal Thana, in 1851.

Wilayat Ali passed away in 1852. Inayat Ali returned to Suttana and took over the command of the Mujahidin. It was the most difficult time for the Wahabis. After the annexation of Punjab, the British were busy in taking over the control of the Frontier areas. The presence of the Wahabis in the region was a challenge to the colonial rulers. The English civil and military officials had been assiduously trying to sow the seeds of dissipation and

that with the fast disintegrating Sikh power, Muslim power was fast emerging in certain areas and if they succeeded in the creation of an independent state it will revive the hopes of the Muslims of British India. So the British gave full support to Gulab Singh against the Wahabis. (Wahabi Movement in India)

distrust among the tribals. It was a part of their proven diplomacy and they succeeded in buying the loyalty of the tribal chiefs to the detriment of the Wahabis. Inayat Ali was a brave man, a warrior and talented leader. He had passed through the most difficult times and had always braved the challenges and defied adversities. During this most unfavourable period for the Wahabis, when most of the tribal chiefs had turned their back on them, and the flow of money and men from India, the life line of the Mujahidin on the Frontier, was in jeopardy as the British were trying to cut the supply line of the Wahabis. Inayat Ali did his best to keep the morale of his men high. But the volatile political conditions in India were making it difficult for the Wahabi activists to raise money for the Mujahidin. The uprising of 1857 had completely disrupted their activities. The entire country was in turmoil. Anarchy had taken the subcontinent into its grip. No one was safe in his own house and the chaotic conditions had made every one aghast. Who could collect money for the Mujahidin when he was himself in dire need of sustenance and support? Even if someone was willing to contribute for the Wahabis, there were no sure and safe means to remit it to the Frontiers. The Mujahidin on the camp were in a miserable state. They had been starving and had to consume burgeoning leaves of trees and suffered from serious intestinal diseases. Many starved to death. These faithful had left their homes, family comfort all their belongings and almost everything to make the supreme sacrifice to uphold the truth and to liberate their homeland from the alien rulers. They defeated the mighty Sikh army, they challenged the supreme colonial power of that time but now they were perishing under wretched conditions. The tribal chiefs, who had vowed to join them in their fight against the enemy, had now joined hands with the enemy. When sieged and beleaguered, they besought their help and got it, but when they (the Wahabis) were desperately

in need of help, they (the tribals) turned their back on them.

Inayat Ali died in 1858, bitter, broken hearted, desolate and in deep despair. A brave son of the Wahabis, a noble soul, an embodiment of dedication and sacrifice. He perished but did not compromise the dignity of his mission. He could have had saved himself and his people by negotiating a deal with the British. As the Amir, it was his foremost duty to save his men from wanton perishing. The Mujahidin had been starving and dying a miserable death. He himself was in deep distress that he was unable to redeem his people from their plight. A deal with the British could have saved them. The suffering of the Wahabis had provided the justification for such a desperate step. But the righteous Wahabis who had pledged to offer any sacrifice for upholding the truth, could not have come to term with the forces of evil. The path they had chosen was fraught with perils, challenges, afflictions and miseries. When they had responded to the call to join the *Jihad* movement, they knew well that they were going to embrace all sort of sufferings, hardships and miseries. When they left their homes they bade farewell to all the worldly connections, family relations and material comforts and had opted for mendicancy, sufferings and afflictions. Endurance, perseverance and resigning to the Divine will was the first lesson they learned in this way. The domain of the demented ones is quite different from the world of the wily and the cunning. Retreat, retract, betrayal and perfidy, these worlds don't exist in their lexicon. Getting beheaded is the greatest reward and honour for them and to think in term of compromise with the evil or to try to escape is the abject disgrace.

The Wahabis were the standard bearers of a mission, the liberation of their homeland. They were not

fighting for their personal glory, they had no ambition to establish their own empire, no desire for political power, just a yearning to see the aliens driven out of the country. This was the mission for which they sought the help from all quarters. They wrote to the Sikhs (Syed Ahmad's letter to Maharaja Ranjit Singh), to the Hindus (his letter to Raja Hindu Rau, regent of Gwalior), to the Muslims (letter to Nawab Amir Khan of Tonk and many other native rulers and nobles) to join them in their fight against the colonial rulers.

Inayat Ali's death deprived the Wahabi movement of the last colossal personality. He was one of those who had joined the movement at the very early stage of its formation. He had worked with Syed Ahmad and Shah Ismail and had made great sacrifices. He was one of those whose meritorious services had made them the guiding stars of the movement.

Maulana Abdullah, the eldest son of Wilayat Ali succeeded Inayat Ali. He had migrated to the Frontiers along with his father. For forty years (till his death in 1901), he led the Wahabi movement. He was a brave and able leader who had inherited the qualities of head and heart of his illustrious father.

The British had intensified their pressure upon the Wahabis. They knew that they had played a pivotal role in fomenting the unrest among the native soldiers of the British army, which culminated in the sepoy revolt of 1857.

A military expedition under Major General Sir Sidney Cotton, with 5000 soldiers, was sent in April 1858, to destroy the Wahabi centres at Sittana and Mangal Thana

(1). Mangal Thana was destroyed and its fortifications were razed to the ground.

There had been encounters between the Utman Zai tribals and the Syeds of Sittana. Taking advantage of the British expeditions, the Utman Zais attacked Sittana on 30th April 1858. Syed Umar Shah, chief of Sittana was killed in the battle. This made the British action easier. They attacked Sittana which had already been over run by the Utman Zais, and destroyed it completely. Thus, both the Wahabi centres in the Frontier areas were devastated by the British. They also took punitive action against the tribals and made them to swear that they will not allow the Wahabis to come back to these localities. (2)

(1) Sidney Cotton gives an account of Mangal Thana, 'Mangal Thana stands on the chief spur of the Mahaban Mountain and was the headquarter of Inayat Ali, who so perseveringly endeavoured in 1857-58 at Narangi and other places to raise the Yusuf Zais to rebellion.

On the plateau stood the fortified house of Inayat Ali with the enclosures of the Hindustani followers, secondly the fortified house of Syed Abbas and thirdly Syed Akbar's citadel. A white masonry tower, the whole having 30 to 40 houses.

Hunter refers to the Sittana camp of the Wahabis – Every Mohammadan religionist too zealous to live quietly under the Christian government girded up his loin and made for Sittana camp. Their hands fell heaviest upon the Sikh villages but they hailed with fierce delight any chance of inflicting a blow upon the English infidels. (p-10)

(2) (i) The English army under Cotton proceeded against Sittana on 4-5-1858. Local tribals had informed Mubarak Shah of the British advancement upon Sittana. Finding himself unable to offer resistance, he fled to Malka, some 33 miles up Sittana ...

The Syeds had already moved out of Sittana and had gone to Malka, a deserted township under their control. They also invited the Wahabis to settle at Malka. Thus the deserted town was transformed into a prosperous and well-populated city.

As already stated, Maulvi Abdullah had succeeded Inayat Ali, as the chief of the Mujahidin. He reconsolidated the Wahabis, who were in a state of dismay and disruption after the ruin of their centre and the death of their Amir.

Maulvi Abdullah through his untiring efforts and the policies, based on circumspection, revived the activities of the Wahabis in the Frontier region and succeeded in winning the confidence and support of the tribals once again. When the British launched military attack on the Wahabis, the tribal stood firmly behind the Mujahidin.

only a small party of the Wahabis numbering 40 and some Jadun tribesmen remained behind in Sittana ... The small band of the Wahabis fought well.

(ii) Nevelle quotes an account from the authentic record of the British campaign against the Frontier tribes, which depicts a calm and resolute behaviour of the Wahabi warriors fighting against the heavy odds and against a much larger force.

The fighting of the Hindustani (the Wahabis) was strongly marked with fanaticism. They came boldly and doggedly ... in perfect silence without shout and words of any kind. All were dressed in their best for the occasion, mostly in white but some of the leaders wore velvet clothes.

Another writer's account:

The latter (the tribesmen) escaped as best as they could

The Ambeyla War, 1863 (1):

It was the most fierce and devastating battle between the Wahabis and the British. The Wahabis were firmly in control of the situation. The British army was entrenched in the valley. The government of India, the Punjab government, and the Commander-in-chief of the British forces in India were on their toes to rescue the beleaguered army. The expedition continued for more than two months. The British Commander of the expedition Gen. Chamberlain was seriously wounded and had to be replaced. The casualties on the side of the Wahabis and the tribals were 3000. The British failed to win the battle and finally

but the Hindustani stood as a man ... The fight was short, desperate and decisive, and in the end everyone of these brave warriors was either killed or captured. Some thirty Wahabis including their leader were killed.

(1) The Ambeyla Campaign was the biggest and the best organised single campaign led by the British against the Wahabis. It represents a major escalation in the British efforts to root out the Wahabis centre.

A large contingent (6000) under the Command of Gen. Chamberlain advanced (in Oct.-Nov 1863) towards the Wahabis centre. Abdullah son of Maulana Wilayat Ali was the Amir of the Wahabis. There were 12000 to 14000 volunteers (Mujahidin) with him. The British army was entrenched in the valley. The Wahabis succeeded in getting the support of the tribals and the Akhund of Swat. The British also sought enforcement from the Punjab government. So crucial was the expedition and so critical and vulnerable was the position of the entrenched British army that the British Commander-in Chief had to rush to Lahore to oversee the entire operation. Gen Chamberlain was seriously wounded in an encounter on 20 November 1863. The Punjab Government was so unnerved that at a point it contemplated ordering a general retreat to save their men.

resorted to their familiar and time-tested formula of bribing, and buying the loyalty of the tribals. They succeeded in buying the support of the Bonair tribals who defected from the Wahabis and it resulted in the defeat of the Mujahidin (1).

(1) The Ambeyla battle had created a commotion in the entire tribal population. A large contingent of the native British army comprising of the tribal soldiers could not be trusted to continue fighting against their own kith and kin for long.

The encounter continued for more than two months. Gen. Chamberlain was replaced by Gen. Garvock. The British realized that they could not win in an open war, so the ever tested formula of conspiracy, seducing the tribals with bribes and fortune was put in motion. James the commissioner and political officer contacted the Bonair tribals and offered them monetary assistance if they distanced themselves from the fighting. The treacherous and greedy tribals succumbed to the British golden blow. They defected and the war in which the Wahabis and the tribals had an upper hand, ended in their defeat.

The war was over but the main objective of the British, destruction of Malka, the Wahabi centre, was yet to be realised. So frightened were the army officers that they dared not to advance towards Malka. James the conspirator again conceived a plan and the Bonar tribals were persuaded to destroy Malka. The deserted fort and other buildings of Malka were destroyed on 22 November 1863. The British lost 847 persons of an army of 9000, a large number were wounded and some died of cold and exposure. The tribals lost 3000 men.

(Wahabi Movement in India, p 189-190)

* The Ambeyla campaign 1863 represented an hour of triumph for the Wahabis when they succeeded in forging an alliance with a large number of the tribals and waged a major war on the Frontiers. Even during the post Ambeyla period when the Wahabis had become weak, the black mountain campaigns

After the Ambeyla war, the Wahabis moved to Changir Zai where they settled in two villages Tangore and Batora and stayed there till 1868. It was through the help of Akhund of Swat whose relations with the Wahabis were ostensibly cordial but an under current of distrust was always there.

A tussle for supremacy had been going on between the Akhund and Syed Amir, popularly known as Mullah Kotha. He was a prominent spiritual leader of the area. The Mullah was an early associate of Syed Ahmad. The Akhund tried to utilise the Wahabis against the Mullah's followers. The Wahabis were caught in the cross fire between the two spiritual leaders of the region. Since the tribal folk were hostile to the Wahabis due to their denouncing of the anti-Islamic customs of the tribal society, the Akhund tried to exploit the tribal sentiments to defeat his rival, Mullah Kotha, who was a sympathiser of

(1868-98) show that they continued to be politically and militarily active. (Ibid, p-194)

* But a coalition of Muslim tribes is always capricious and whatever our arms had failed to accomplish dissension and diplomacy began to effect. As early on 25th November 1863, the commissioner of Peshawar succeeded in drawing off certain clans of Bonair. Another contingent to the number of 2000 was induced to return to their houses, and persuaded the Swat leader to disperse his followers. Several minor chiefs scenting the defection withdrew, leaving the seeds of mutual distrust among those who remained behind. By 10th December (1863) this distrust seemed ready to bear fruit.

... This defection proved to be the death blow to the fanatic's cause. Every moment some clan or another took itself off. The people from Bajaur and Dher deserted. The coalition dissolved like a mountain mist and the Bonair tribes on whom the rebel

the Wahabis. To avoid a clash with the hostile tribals, the Wahabis moved out of Batora and went to Baj Kota as the chief of Baj Kota was the supporter of Mullah Kotha and had assured help to the Wahabis (1).

The Ambeyla war had revived the spirit of resistance against the British. The overwhelming support the Wahabis received from the tribals had alarmed the British (2) and they realised that how vulnerable could be their position in the valley and the mountains. So they decided to crush this resistance and provide smooth tracks for the safe movement of their army. The Black mountain campaigns, which continued intermittently from 1868 to 1891, were meant to establish British military supremacy in the region. The Hasan Zai and Alka Zai tribes bravely challenged the British advances in their area. The Wahabis were always ready to extend a helping hand to any tribe engaged in fighting against the British. In the battle of Agrora they fought along with their proverbial dashing

camp had chiefly depended entered in to an engagement with us to burn the fanatics in their den. In less than a week a strong British brigade reinforced and guided by the Bonairs advanced in perfect safety through the mountains to the Fanatic settlement at Malka and reduced it to the ashes.

Hunter (Our Indian Musalmans, p 19-24)

(1) Wahabi Movement in India.

(2) Hunter gives a tribal wise strength of the army under the Wahabi command, which comes to 53000. He further says that the actual number of the forces against us at one time, rose to 60,000. (p-17)

James Okinealy wrote, "The Ambeyla campaign has shown us that they (the Wahabis) are not to be despised and that the timid Bengali, will, under certain condition, fight as fiercely as an Afghan. (Hunter p-111)

spirit. The British after their victory in the battle, imposed a fine of Rs. 14000/- upon the tribals. They constructed roads to facilitate movement of their soldiers and established out posts at every strategically important point.

THE TRIALS

The 1857 uprising and then the Ambeyla War had virtually crushed the Wahabis. Discontinuation of transmission of money from India had put the Mujahidin on the Frontier under severe economic constraints.

In the Ambeyla battle (1863), the British had to lick the dust. But their treacherous diplomacy played havoc with the Wahabis. The British not only persuaded the tribals to defect from the Wahabis alliance against the British, but also got the Malka and Sittana camps of the Wahabis destroyed by the Bonair tribals, who had been seduced by them (the British) to opt out of the tribal coalition forged by the Wahabis. When their camps were attacked, the Wahabis vacated them in panic. They could not collect and carry anything from these camps. Some very important documents, particularly the correspondence with the Wahabi activists in British India, were seized by the English army. These were forwarded to the British authorities and they came to know the addresses of the Wahabi activists and their centres in India. This led to the arrest of Maulvi Muhammad Jafar of Thanesar and the Wahabi leaders at Sadiqpur (1). The interrogation of these arrested Wahabi leaders culminated in what is called the Wahabi trials.

(1) Maulvi Wilayat Ali died in 1274 A.H. (1852 A.C.). Meanwhile the British fought a battle with the Mujahidin in which they (the British) suffered a humiliating defeat with heavy casualties. This loss enraged their civil and military authorities and the shock wave took even London into its grip. The British launched a retaliatory attack on the Mujahidin camp. It was such a massive attack that the Mujahidin had to

The trials are titled as under:

1. Ambala Trials 1864
2. Patna Trials 1865
3. Maldah Trials 1870 (September)
4. Raj Mahal Trials 1870 (October) (1)

Hunter in his book (Our Indian Musalmans) has mentioned of a cavalry man of the British army, Ghazan Khan, who had fought in the Ambeyla battle. One day, while on his routine patrol, he noticed a group of Bengali Muslim travellers. He suspected them to be the Wahabi workers. He arrested and charged them with sedition. But

retreat. They withdrew from their camp (it was at Mangalthana). As they had to vacate their camp in a state of panic, most of their belongings were left behind. It included some very important documents and a number of letters received from various places. These documents and letters were seized by the British and it was from these letters that the British came to know of the existence of various Wahabi centres and the names of the activists working at these centres.

(Tazkera-e-Sadiqa, p-183)

(1) The evidences recorded in the Ambala trials of 1864, rendered necessary the Patna trials of 1865 and the cumulative facts, then disclosed, led to a host of new arrests. With the Maldah trial of 1870, the Raj Mahal trials of the same year, and the great trial which has just now condemned another batch of fanatics to transportation for life.

Hunter (Our Indian Musalmans, p-76)

After Maulana Inayat Ali's demise, Maulana Wilayat Ali's son Abdullah, was chosen the Amir of the Mujahidin of Swat. It was during this period that the Wahabi trials were initiated. The Wahabis working at these centres were prosecuted by the British government under some section, for sedition. But the prosecution failed to substantiate the charges. The government issued confidential instructions to the concerned judges not to acquit those charged in these cases. The houses, properties and

the English magistrate released them as there was no sound proof of such objectionable activities against them and they were simple way farers. (Hunter laments the cursory approach of the magistrate towards the Wahabi activists.)

Ghazan Khan, the Punjabi horseman, was true to his salt (*Namak Halal*), as Hunter has put it. He took the acquittal of the Bengali Muslims as an insult to his fealty to the English masters. So he persuaded his son to go to the Wahabi camp incognito. He collected some very important information relating to the functioning of the Wahabi centres in British India. These informations led to a British crackdown upon the Wahabi functionaries in the country. Maulvi Muhammad Jafar of Thanesar who had been working as a petition writer at the town court, was the most active and confident Wahabi activist. He supplied money and material to the camp in NWFP. He was arrested along with the other Wahabi leaders of Sadiqpur. These accused were in fact freedom fighters but were treated like dreaded criminals. They were brought to Ambala in chains and fetters and were charged with treason and plotting to overthrow the British rule in India. Some accused engaged English lawyers to plead their case while Muhammad Jafar himself pleaded his case. He has given a detailed account of the sufferings, afflictions and torments the Wahabi leaders underwent during the trial, in his memoirs 'Tarikh-e-Ajiba'.

They were not allowed to offer the prayers collectively during the hearing of the case. They however,

other assets of the arrested Wahabis were confiscated as they were deported to the Andaman Islands till further orders.

Maulvi Yahya Ali and Maulana Ahmadullah breathed

managed to offer their prayers individually out of the court premises. Maulvi Yahya Ali, Maulvi Muhammad Jafar and others were sentenced to death. The British noticed that the Wahabis were overjoyed on the death sentence, as they would attain the sublime position of a martyr in the cause of Allah. The fanatic British reversed the verdict simply because they did not like to see the Wahabis, the deadliest enemy of British rule in India, in a jubilant mood (1).

The commutation of the death sentence to life imprisonment (transportation for life) was not a gesture of

their last on the Island. Maulana Abdul Rahim, Mian Abdul Ghaffar and Maulana Muhammad Jafar of Thanesar, returned home after twenty years. But their houses and properties were not restored to them.

(Tazkera-e-Sadiqa, p-184)

(1) When the judge Herbert Edwards announced his order awarding me death penalty and reproached me saying that "you are the affluent person of your town and well versed in the law of your country, but you misused your capabilities (in opposing the British government). Now you will be hanged, your property will be forfeited and even your dead body will not be handed over to your relatives. I shall be extremely happy to see you on the gallows". I said, "Life and death is in the hand of Allah. He is omnipotent and can cause you to die before you get me hanged". He was livid with anger but what could he do more beyond ordering me to be hanged.

(Kala Paani, p 23-24)

On hearing the order of the death sentence, I was so happy that even the good news of winning the rule of seven climes would not have made me so exhilarated. Maulvi Yahya Ali was also extremely cheerful, but the face of Shaikh Muhammad Shafi had turned dark.

Percener, the superintendent of police, came to me and said, "You should have cried on hearing the order for execution, but why are you so cheerful". I said, while moving out of the

mercy on the part of the British judiciary but a callous judgement to aggravate their sufferings and to rejoice upon the enduring torment (1). All the condemned prisoners were sent to jail to wait for the transportation to the Andamans.

Maulana Yahya Ali was an embodiment of steadfastness. He delivered his sermons from the prison cell, addressing the guards on duty who were either Sikhs or Gorkhas. His exhortations were so appealing and edifying that the guards listened with rapt attention and wept. They would not like to leave even after the duty

court, "The hope of attaining martyrdom has made me happy. This is the highest blessing and reward, what do you know of it?"
(Kala Paani, p-25)

- Jafar, the scrivener, and Yahya Ali, the priest, made no pretensions to loyalty and sought nothing at our hands. Earnest, conscientious men they pricked themselves with the poisoned weapons which religion had put into their hands and now the Laertis like they have paid the price of their treachery; history may dwell with emotions almost akin to pity on their fate

(Hunter, p-69)

- The three most conspicuous features of the conspiracy which the trials disclosed were admirable sagacity with which so widely spread a treason had been organised, the secrecy with which the complicated operations were conducted and the absolute fidelity to one another which its members maintained... It is impossible to resist the conviction that the conspirators with the exception of the army contractor (Muhammad Shafi), were activated by a conscientious zeal for what they believed to be the cause of God and by a firm resolve to abide steadfast to the death.
(Hunter)

(1) The British authorities took the wise revenge of denying even to the most treasonable of them the glory of martyrdom.

hours were over. The guards and the other staff of the prison were so overwhelmed by the piety of these Wahabi leaders that they offered them an opportunity to escape from the jail (1).

These noble souls had to undergo prison rigours. Maulana Yahya Ali was a man of frail physique and he was put to the hard labour of pulling the Persian wheel. This arduous work was beyond his capacity; he discharged blood in his urine. The jail staff was callous but the prison doctor ordered him to be given some lighter work. So he was transferred to the spinning section and was put to weaving. Maulana Yahya Ali never complained against rigours and the brutalities he suffered during his incarceration. He underwent all the torment and torture with dignity and forbearance. When his beard was shaven as per the prison rules, he held the shaven hair in his hand and remarked, "Grieve not, thou hast been shaven in the way of Allah". He died on the island at the age of 45 (2).

The highest court of the province, after a patient hearing in appeal confirmed Sir Herbert Edwards findings as to their guilt but modified the capital sentence even in the three most flagrant cases to transportation for life. (Hunter, p 70-71)

(1) One night all the prison guards, after consulting one another, came and requested the three (Wahabi leaders) to escape from the jail. They argued, "We shall be prosecuted for dereliction of duty and would be punished. We will accept the punishment but at least your lives would be saved". All the three thanked them for their kindness and invoked Allah's blessings upon them but declined their advice. They said that they would not try to escape; they will be released when it was Allah's will.

[Sarguzasht-e-Mujahidin (G.R. Mehr), p 376-77]

The prophet (Syed Ahmad) in appointing Kaliphs at Patna, in 1821, had chosen men of indomitable zeal and strength of will. We have seen how time after time, when the cause appeared

He was one of the brightest stars on the firmament of Sadiqpur (Patna). Maulvi Ahmadullah also died there a few years later.

In January 1882, when the Governor General of India declared general amnesty for the prisoners, Maulvi Muhammad Jafar and Maulvi Abdul Rahim, the surviving Wahabi captives, returned to the homeland.

The investigations and evidences, as well as the documents seized from the Wahabi camp on the Frontiers revealed the involvement of the Fraizis(1) of lower Bengal region. This movement was a socio-religious reformative one like the Wahabi movement in Northern India. Their

ruined, they again and again raised the standard of holy war from the dust. Indefatigable as missionaries, careless of themselves, blameless in their lives, supremely devoted to the overthrow of the English infidels, admirably skillful in organising a permanent system for supplying money and recruits, the Patna Caliphs stand forth as the types and examples of the sect. Much of their teaching was faultless and it has been given to them to stir up thousands of their countrymen to a pure life and a truer concept of the Almighty.

Hunter (Our Indian Musalmans, p 46-47)

(1) Fraizi Movement was started by one, Shariatullah (1781-1840) of District Faridpur (Bengal). After his early education, he went to Arabia and stayed there for 20 years. On returning home he took to preaching. He preached monotheism (Tanhid) and denounced Bida (Innovations). The Fraizi movement had much in common with the Wahabis but the Fraizis were the followers of the Hanafi school and believed in Taqlid. They also held that Eid and the Friday congregational prayers were not to be offered as India, under the British rule, was "Darul Harb". The Wahabis agreed that India was ruled by the infidels (Darul Harb), but they did not agree that the congregational prayers should be discontinued.

beliefs were also akin to those of the Wahabis and they were also fiercely against the British rule, which had caused economic and political ruin of the Indian Muslims, particularly the Bengal peasantry. The Baraset Rising (1)

The Fraizis were challenged by the local Zamindars as the movement was raised against the exploitation also. Shariatullah was succeeded by his son Mohsinuddin Ahmad (Dadu Mian) (1819-1862) under whose leadership, the movement became more political and militant.

(Wahabi Movement in India. p 87-88)

The Fanatic Muslims of the Delta, bear the name not of Wahabi, but of Fraizis or rejector of all gloss and not essential part of Islam. They call themselves of new Musalmans and muster in vast numbers in the district east of Calcutta.

In 1843 the sect had attained such dangerous proportion as to form a subject of special enquiry by the Government. The head of the Bengal police reported that a single one of their preacher had gathered together some eighty thousand followers.

The late Caliphs especially Yahya Ali amalgamated the Fraizis of lower Bengal with the Wahabis of northern India and during the last three years they have been found side by side alike among the dead on the field of battle and in the dock of our court of justice.

(Hunter, p 71-72)

(1) **Titu Mir:** The Baraset rising led by Nisar Ali, better known as Titu Mir, had similar aims and objectives but it was closer to the Wahabi thinking. Nisar Ali belonged to village Chandpur in 24 Pargana district of Bengal. He went to Arabia in the company of a member of Delhi's Royal family. There he met Syed Ahmad and returned as a powerful preacher of the faith. He was a strong supporter of the cause of oppressed peasantry. Very soon he gathered a following of several thousand men. His activities were naturally opposed by the Zamindars... His preachings were also opposed by a section of Muslim cultivators who felt aggrieved with some of his teachings which

of Nasir Ali (Titu Mir) was also a socio-religious reformative movement wedded to fight against the British exploitation in Bengal. These two movements joined hands with the Wahabis to fight against the colonial rule in India and to emancipate the peasantry from Indigo planter's exploitation.

The Wahabis had brought them in their fold and they formed the main contingent of the Mujahidin on the Frontiers. They were devoted soldiers and dedicated

denounced some of their cherished customs and social practices (like *Tazias* in the month of Moharram).

... A Zamindar Kishan Roy of village Poorna situated on the bank of Ichha Mati river, had imposed illegal and discriminatory fines upon the Muslim tenants particularly the followers of Titu Mir. These fines included beard tax of Rupees two and half per head and other heavier impositions such as an impost of Rupees five hundred and one thousand on the construction of *Kuchha* and *Pucca* mosques and Rupees fifty for giving up a hinduanised name. The followers of Titu Mir opposed these discriminatory imposts and there were violent clashes between the peasantry and the Zamindar's men... The followers of Titu Mir were joined by Mishku Shah and his followers... They attacked Poorna and plundered it (November 1831)... a Brahmin was killed and a temple defiled and a native Christian was assaulted. More significantly the insurgents openly proclaimed the extinction of company rule... in 1832 the Government forces launched a massive attack against the insurgents. Titu Mir fell fighting and 350 of his followers including Ghulam Masoom were taken prisoners. They were later put on trial in Alipore. Ghulam Masoom was sentenced to death and the other 140 were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment.

(Wahabi Movement in India, p-92)

It would be wrong to view the Fraizi movement and the Baraset rising in isolation. These have to be examined in wider

activists of the movement. They stood firm like a rock through the trials and tribulations (1).

The trials of the Wahabis were one of the darkest chapters of the history of persecution and torment but they demonstrated a remarkable sense of forbearance and steadfastness. Not a single accused tendered apology or denied the charge of sedition and high treason against the alien rulers. They were men of sterling character and had dedicated their lives to the cause of their religion and their homeland.

The Maldah Trial, 1870 :

Maulvi Amiruddin was the main accused in the case. He was the Khalifa of Maulana Wilayat Ali and the son of Maulvi Abdul Rahman of Lucknow, who preached in Maldah and supplied recruits and money to the Frontier camp. After his passing away, Amiruddin, took over the work. In 1853, Maulvi Abdul Rahman was arrested but later released. Maulvi Amiruddin was earlier warned in the Patna trial of 1865.

background of the growth of the Wahabi movement in India and the agrarian unrest in many parts of Bengal. Although the Fraizi movement began independently, it had much in common with the Wahabi movement. Both drew inspiration from a common source and had similar objectives. British officials and observers regarded the activities of the Fraizis and the Wahabis as interconnected if not identical. In fact the Fraizis prepared ground for the wider positive response to the Wahabi activities in many parts of Bengal. (Wahabi Movement in India, p-94)

(1) Yahya Ali showed an admirable knowledge of character in selecting these men, for neither fear of detection, nor hope of reward, induced a single one of them to appear against their leader in the hour of his fall. (Indian Musalmans, p-66)

Under the Maldah Trial 1870, Maulvi Amiruddin was prosecuted for high treason. The High court sentenced him to transportation for life and forfeiture of property. He reached Andamans in March 1872. In 1883, he returned home after being released under general amnesty.

Raj Mehal Trials :

Raj Mehal District Bhagalpur (Bihar), Ibrahim Mandal was put on trial and sentenced to transportation for life and assets to be forfeited. He was released in 1878 under the orders of amnesty by Lord Ripon, the viceroy of India.

Patna Conspiracy Case 1871

There were seven accused in the case, Pir Muhammad, Amir Khan, Hashamdad Khan, Mubarak Ali, Tabarak Ali, Haji Din Muhammad and Amiruddin.

Amir Khan was the resident of Mohalla Alamganj (Patna). He was hide merchant and had a flourishing business in Bihar and Bengal. Even the big English traders could not compete him. His property was estimated to be worth of crores. He was accused and prosecuted just to ruin his business and forfeit his property. The cases of Amir Khan and Hashmdad Khan were heard by Justice Norman of Culcatta high court (Aug-Sept 1871). He did not confess to be a Wahabi... He stated under oath that he was a Sunni. Amir Khan aged 75 years; hide merchant was arrested in Patna, under regulation 111 of 1818. He was earlier arrested in 1864 (Ramzan 1280 A.H.) during Ambala trials but was later released on bail. He was again arrested in 1869 (Rabu-ul Awwal 1286 A.H.) and had been put behind the bars till 1871 when his trial was started in Patna. He remained in the prison not under any section of the Penal Code, but at the sweet will of the Governor General. The trial proceedings lasted for three months (May, June and July).

The record of the evidences shows that not much had been discussed about the prisoners. In the matter of money Amir

Mian Saheb Syed Nazir Husain :

Hazrat Mian Sahib was the most prominent Wahabi theologian of his time. He had been occupying the highest seat of theological instruction in Delhi once adorned by Shah Abdul Aziz and Shah Muhammad Ishaq. He was always in touch with the Wahabi leaders and the activists in all parts of the Indian sub-continent. When the British raided the Sadiqpur centre of the Wahabis and seized documents, they found correspondence addressed to Hazrat Mian Sahib. His house in Delhi was searched and he was arrested but was released later. He was again arrested and imprisoned at Rawalpindi Jail. He remained incarcerated for more than one year (1).

Khan appears to be very generous but it was very much difficult to prove his relationship with *Jihad*,... ordinary and the old prisoners were produced as witness. They deposed what ever they were asked to testify and on these false witnesses they (the Wahabis), were convicted and sentenced to transportation for life. Amir Khan's property worth crores of rupees was forfeited. Notwithstanding the life term, Amir Khan was released after four years, as a display of official mercy, but not a single penny of his property and assets was restituted to him. [Masood Alam Nadvi (Hindustan Ki Pehli Islamic Tehrik), p128-141]

(1) A search of Nazir Hussain's house yielded a very large number of letters. Some of the letters were from Muhammad Jafar Thanasari and Tabarak Ali of Patna, the well known Wahabis. There was also a letter written by Nazir Hussain to Abdullah(s/o Wilayat Ali) the Amir of the Wahabi Mujahidin on the Frontier. Reily (the investigating officer) recommended the arrest of Nazir Husain but he was an Alim (religious scholar) of great repute and influence, the govt. in the absence of more concrete evidence against him was reluctant to take this extreme step. The matter was referred to Punjab Government in whose jurisdiction Delhi lay and the latter ordered his detention in jail for six months as a precautionary measure but released

The Wahabi trials virtually paralysed the movement. All the leaders (activists) were transported for life and their properties were forfeited. The Wahabi camps at Sittana, Malka and Mangal Thana had also been destroyed by the British. Now the centre of Wahabi activities in India (Sadiqpur-Patna) was also destroyed and the entire complex was demolished.

However, despite these devastating blows, the Wahabi activities, although at a low key, continued. The flow of money and men again started. The Wahabis of Punjab, Bihar, Bengal, Delhi and other provinces were active to keep the movement alive. Maulana Abdul Aziz

him soon after.

In December 1869, Riely submitted more information against Nazir Husain. He pointed out that according to the statement given by Abdullah at Rawalpindi in 1869, Nazir Husain was the chief of Wahabis at Delhi. Another witness from Raj Mehal, had stated that he had been induced by Nazir Husain to go to the Frontiers.

Riely recommended that Nazir Husain should be further re-examined and that he confront the witness. The papers were again referred to the Punjab government but no action seems to have been taken against him.

(Wahabi Movement in India, p 243-44)

Mian Saheb's house was raided and searched in Delhi. Nothing incriminatory was found but he was arrested and taken to Rawalpindi, and had to spend one year in detention there. During his imprisonment, he obtained permission from the authorities, to borrow books from the government library. One of his students, Abdullah was with him in the prison. Mian Saheb taught him Sahi Bukhari during the incarceration. After one year, he was released, as the charges against him were not proved.

(Al Hayat-o-bad- Al Mamat)

Rahimabadi (Bihar) Maulvi Muhammad Ali Qusuri (Lahore) Dr. Muhammad Farid Darhhanga (Bihar) Maulvi Abdullah Ghazipuri (U.P) Kaka Muhammad Umar (Tamil Nadu) Hafiz Hamidullah (Delhi) and many other prominent Wahabi leaders and activists (popularly known as Ahlehadis) were always busy in raising funds and recruiting Ahlehadis young men to send them to the Frontiers. The traders belonging to the Ahlehadis Community contributed generously to keep the movement active (1). In Delhi 'Darul Hudis Rahmania' the prestigious college of theology was the center of the Wahabi activists. However, these activities were rather symbolic. The British were now the supreme ruling power in the subcontinent and elsewhere. This token resistance posed no threat to them. It was why that these activities were not seriously viewed on the Frontiers. Maulvi Abdullah, chief of the Mujahidin, died in 1901 after leading the movement for forty years. He was succeeded by his younger brother, Maulana Abdul Karim. He established his centre (base) at Asmast. He died in 1915 (2). Maulvi Namatullah was chosen the new Amir but he deviated from the right path that had been trodden by Syed Ahmad, Shah Ismail, Wilayat Ali, Inayat Ali and his predecessors Abdullah and Abdul Karim. It was alleged that he had negotiated a deal with the British. There was

(1) In Delhi the Panjabi (Ahlehadis) traders, in Calcutta the cloth and iron merchants (belonging to the Ahlehadis community) had been contributing generously. It may be said that during the last phase of the Wahabi movement the responsibility to provide financial support to the Mujahidin was mainly shouldered by the Ahlehadis community.

(Sargozasht-e-Mujahidin (G.R. Mehr) p-594)

(2) Maulana Abdul Karim had established close contacts with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and often sought his advice on important issues through his emissaries. Once the Mujahidin

an air of frustration and indignation at the Wahabi camp and the other centres in India. This fissiparous step led to division in the rank and a prominent Mujahid leader Maulvi Muhammad Bashir defected from the Nematullah group and established a new Mujahidin camp at Chamarkand (Yaghistan). A large number of the Mujahidin who were opposed to the path chosen by Nematullah went over to Muhammad Bashir's camp. Soon the new camp grew stronger and enjoyed more prestige, power and influence.

Amir Nematullah was killed by his secretary. Maulvi Muhammad Bashir was a dedicated activist of the movement. A man of unwavering conviction and uncompromising in his approach and outlook, he was appointed defence minister in the interim government in exile formed in Kabul. (1)

needed the services of a doctor. When Maulana Azad came to know, he arranged to send a medical student who had just qualified in medicine. (Sargozasht, p-476)

With the death of Maulana Abdul Karim (on 13-2-1915/Rabiul Awwal, 25, 1333) the last soldier of the caravan once led by Wilayat Ali and Inayat Ali disappeared from the scene. He was the last Amir of the chain of the leaders whose first Amir was Syed Ahmad. The subsequent set up was much inferior and different in term of religio-political sense. We may argue that the conditions in which Maulana Abdul Karim was brought up and trained, were now no more in prevalence. The circumstances had changed to a great extent and the previous strategies and policies needed a change.

(Sargozasht-e-Mujahidin, p-476)

(1) When in Asmast, Amir Nematullah was suspected of hobnobbing with the British, his secretary, Abdul Rashid alias Muhammad Yusuf, who was convinced of his treacherous moves, shot him dead. He was himself killed in the commotion

Even after destroying the Frontier camp and the Sadiqpur Wahabi centre and transportation for life, the burning passion of revenge of the authorities had not cooled down. The repression had been continuing unabated. The innocent Muslims were arrested on the slightest suspicion of belonging to the Wahabi sect. The entire Muslim community was the target of brute persecution. A section of the Muslims, opposed to the Wahabis, was also instrumental in inciting the British administration against them. Their scholars issued Fatwas declaring that the Wahabis should not be allowed to pray in the mosques, if someone found there, he should be expelled;

جامع الشواهد فى اخراج الوهابيين من المساجد

The ignorant Muslim masses under the influence of these fanatic scholars and their *fatwas*, persecuted the Wahabi Muslims. They were humiliated, thrashed and thrown out of the mosques. When Mian Saheb Syed Nazir Husain went to Arabia to perform Hajj, he was chased by the miscreants. At Makkah, they instigated the authorities against the great Wahabi theologian. Since the Turkish administration was deadly against the followers of Shaikhul Islam Imam Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab, (who

that followed (Ibid p-651). Ghulam Rasul Mehr writes, "In 1934, when I visited the camp I suggested to Maulana Muhammad Bashir that he could better serve the cause from within India. He was sitting but on hearing my plea, he got up in a huff. I noticed that tears were rolling in his eyes. He said, "If I was not sure that you have made this suggestion out of love and sincerity, I would have thought that you have been deputed by the British to seduce me. When I left my house, I had vowed not to return to my homeland as long as it had the shadow of *Firangi* (British) rule in whatever form it may be. I shall deem it unlawful for myself to take even a breath on the enslaved soil. I shall abide by my pledge till the last breath".

(Sargozasht-e-Mujahidin, p-540)

were called Wahabis) and everyone, suspected to be a Wahabi, was subjected to interrogation and inquisition by the official agencies. Mian Saheb and his companions were also summoned to the court of the Pasha (Turkish administrator of Makkah). He faced the inquisition boldly and was not apologetic. His piety, erudition and boldness impressed the Pasha and he was convinced of his innocence. He treated him kindly and permitted him to visit Madinah for which he had expressed his deep desire. His companions apprehending some fresh mischief there, advised him to drop the idea. But Mian Saheb refused to return without offering prayer at the mosque of Allah's Messenger (PBUH). He visited Madinah and by the grace of Allah, no harm was caused to him (1).

The somber phase of persecution of the Wahabis in the post 1857 period was long and extremely agonizing. Not only the masses of the Ahlehadis community were the target of repression but renowned scholars like Mian Saheb Syed Nazir Husain and Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Bhopal, had to face the ordeal. Siddiq Hasan Khan was an erudite scholar, and a prolific writer. The ruler of the state of Bhopal, Nawab Shahjahan Begum, who was a widow, married him. The title of Nawab Walajah was conferred on him as the spouse of the ruler. As a co-ruler he introduced radical reforms in the administration. It was now based on the Islamic Shariah. He invited eminent scholars of Hadith from India and abroad to the state and assigned the duty of teaching and dissemination of Islamic theology, particularly the Hadith. Soon Bhopal became one of the most reputed centres of learning. He himself authored books on various Islamic subjects. As a scholar he had close and cordial relations with the prominent Wahabi scholars. He, through his consort Shahjahan

(1) Al-Hayat-o-bad-Al Mamat.

Begum, offered the post of chief Qazi of the state to Mian Saheb but he declined the offer (1).

Siddiq Hasan's adversaries, who had been lying in wait approached the British resident and instigated him against Siddiq Hasan that he was a Wahabi and had close contacts with the Wahabis. The British, always ready to strike against the Wahabis, divested him of his title and royal privileges.

It was Maulvi Muhammad Husain of Batala (Punjab) who submitted a petition to the Government of India, through the Lt. Governor of Punjab, requesting that the term Wahabi, which had erroneously been made synonymous with rebel should not be misused as a tool to persecute the Muslims who adhere to the pristine teachings of Islam as enshrined in the Quran and the Hadith and had nothing to do with the Wahabis of Najd (Arabia). The petition was sent to the government of Punjab for comments. After examining the merits of the case, the government of India issued a notification in 1886 that henceforth, the term Wahabi should not be used in the official correspondence. Similar instructions were sent to the states of Bombay, Madras and NWPF during the years 1888-90 (2) and now the Wahabis were called the Ahlehadis (3).

(1) Nawab Shahjahan Begum, ruler of Bhopal offered the post of chief Qazi (Qaziul Quzat) to Mian Saheb, but he refused to accept it saying that I will be in comforts as the chief Qazi but where will these poor students go. (Ibid)

(2) Wahabi Movement in India.

(3) Commenting on the notification Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the known Wahabi, wrote: "We don't mind whatever name is given to anyone by the people, whoever addressed someone by a name

to denigrate him exposes himself to disgrace. But Maulvi Abu Sayeed Muhammad Hussain did not like to be addressed to as Wahabi. So he submitted a petition to the Government that the members of his sect who were infact Ahlehadis, should not be referred to as the Wahabis, as the antagonists had contemptuously named this sect as such.

One of the reasons why Maulvi Abu Sayeed Muhammad Husain abhorred this name was the events, which took place in Arabia during the days of the son of Abdul Wahab. The sultan of Turkey also considered him as the rebel. This Turkish aversion was reported in the books of history compiled on the Wahabi movement in English. The British authorities in India were also influenced by these reports and some unfortunate events that happened in the Frontier region of India, further deepened these misgivings. This led to the misconception that the term Wahabi also meant a rebel. As a matter of fact it was a false notion, Wahabi-ism has nothing to do with rebellion.

All the Muslims should be grateful to Maulvi Abu Sayeed Muhammad Husain that he endeavoured to dispel these misgivings. The British government also deserves our profuse thanks that it caused the efforts of Maulvi Abu Sayeed Muhammad Husain to fructify.

Thus, thanks to the efforts of Maulvi Muhammad Husain, the government has conceded that henceforth, in the official correspondence, the community will not be referred to as the Wahabis but as the Ahlehadis as this community likes to be called as such. Wahabi, Ahlehadis or the Adherents of Hadith, Precept of Allah's Messenger (PBUH)".

(Maqalat-e-Sir Syed, p 211-212)

WAHABI'S CONTACTS WITH INDIAN SOLDIERS

After launching the campaign for *Jihad* or the war of liberation, the Wahabis evolved a strategy to contact the native rulers, primes and nobles as well as the rulers of the neighbouring countries. At the same time they deputed their activists to get in touch with the native soldiers of the British army.

They knew that the throne of the British imperialism mainly rested upon the shoulders of the native soldiers. But these native personnel who constituted the majority of the British troops in India, were treated badly by their white masters. They were discriminated against in the matter of pay, promotion and other privileges that were generously granted to their British counter-parts in the armed forces. They were constantly harassed and humiliated by their superior officers. Those who had bargained their patriotism and national pride just to earn a handful of coins as salary, had lacerated hearts, and injured ego.

The Wahabis were well aware of the fact that the native soldiers had been seething with anger, and those disgruntled elements could easily be motivated to join the Mujahidin or to revolt against their masters. An appeal to their patriotism and their obligations towards their religion and a call to their self-respect would ignite the dormant ember of unrest into a blazing fire.

The activists were sent to the different native battalions. In Punjab, Maulvi Najmuddin established contacts with the Muslim soldiers of the Sikh army (1). In Hyderabad Maulana Wilayat Ali and his associates made inroads into the British army stationed there.

The Wahabis went into the units as the preachers and incited them to sedition. They exhorted them to perform *Jihad* against the alien rulers. This appeal was not confined to the Muslim soldiers only, all the Indian soldiers, irrespective of their creed, were called upon to rise against the colonial rule (2).

(1) Maulvi Najmuddin stated that he used to contact the Muslim soldiers of Ranjit Singh's army and exhorted them to join the *Jihad* movement. Many soldiers agreed to desert the Sikh army and go to the frontier. But in the meanwhile he was arrested and sent to Lahore. He was produced before the Maharaja. He was in fetters. The Maharaja ordered to unfetter him. He said that he had heard much of the marksmanship of the soldiers of Khalifa Sahib. Let him demonstrate his skill. He offered him employment in his army. But Najmuddin declined the offer saying that he was a Mujahid and was not supposed to be employed anywhere.

The Maharaja gave him fifty rupees, one horse and scarfs and directed his guard to escort him to the river Attock to enable him to go to his camp.

(2) It is to credit of the Wahabi leaders that they realised early, the great importance of the sepoys. They constituted the chief instrument of the British power in India, and if they could be neutralised, half of the battle would have been won.

Realising this, the Wahabi agents repeatedly brought home the sepoys, the full extent of the power wielded by them and the dependence of the British government on them. The

These contacts and correspondence had awakened the conscience of the sepoys. The fact was dawned upon them that they could retaliate and had the prowess to overthrow the foreign regime, which treated them like mute animals. The uprising of 1857 was undoubtedly the sprouting of the

Wahabi agents were deputed to the army stations, who tried to win the support of as many as possible. Where simple preaching and appeal to the patriotism failed, monetary inducement was tried.

(Wahabi Movement in India, p-145)

Wilayat Ali proceeded to Deccan for missionary activities as per the directions of Syed Ahmad, lived in Hyderabad for some time. Nawab Mubariz-ud-Daula (younger brother of Nasir-ud-Daula, the Nizam of Hyderabad) also took bai'at at his hand. Through him, Wilayat Ali was able to approach the high placed persons and established contacts with the Indian units of the army. The part of this work resulted in what can be called the Hyderabad Conspiracy 1839. But it may be mentioned here that the work of infiltration in the units of Indian army, which was an important plank of the Wahabi Movement, was started by Wilayat Ali during this period.

(Wahabi Movement in India, p-83)

Mubariz-ud-Daula had taken baiat at the hand of Wilayat Ali. The adherents of Mubariz-ud-Daula had been working among the native troops in Hyderabad and other places in South. Several Indian ruling chiefs including that of Karnool, were involved in these activities. The Raja of Satara, the Prince of Jodhpur, Udaigiri, Bhopal and Rampur were in correspondence with the organisers. Some of them had their personal grievances against the British but a general anti-British sentiment was shared by them all.

(Wahabi Movement in India)

The ramifications of Hyderabad Conspiracy in which Nawab Mubariz-ud-Daula was imprisoned at Golkunda Fort were wide and spread even to the south. During the investigation it had been found that there existed a network of

seeds of sedition sown by the Wahabis. Had the native rulers not extended a helping hand to the alien rulers, foreign ascendancy in a major part of India would have been wiped out. But the myopic leadership, incompetent military command and the intrinsic dissipative tendencies of the feudal lords played havoc with the national uprising. There was no co-ordination among various rebel centers. Delhi, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi and many centres elsewhere in the country were fighting a lonely fight. No concerted efforts or a combined strategy was evolved. The ubiquitous British agents were active everywhere in the rank of the revolutionaries to frustrate all their moves and keep their masters informed of all the tactical planning. The British got reinforcements from their bastions in Bombay, Bengal and Madras besides military assistance

Wahabi agents working in different civil and military stations in Madras and other places down south. Their activities were reported to the government by the officer commanding at Vellore.

A list of the Khalifas of Maulvi Muhammad Ali Rampuri, who were working in the civil and military stations in South, was also sent to the government.

(Our Indian Musalman, p 47-48)

A treasonable correspondence with our troops was seized by the Punjab authorities. The leaders made skillful attempt to tamper with the 4th native infantry stationed in Rawalpindi, conveniently near to their frontier camp and one of the first regiment on their invading our province would have been sent to act against them.

In 1853, several of our native soldiers were convicted of correspondence with the traitors. (Our Indian Musalmans, p-12)

In Madras, the government had been watching the activities of the Wahabis for quite some time. In 1866, a man

provided by their loyal native rulers. But no Indian prince came forward to help the rebels openly. Thus the rebellion so assiduously planned by the Wahabis was crushed by the British.

There is a general notion that the Wahabis did not participate actively in the uprising of 1857 as their attention was focussed on the Frontier camp (1). But this is not the fact. The Wahabis were the main architect of the historic uprising but unfortunately it had fallen in the hands of those who had no revolutionary ideology. They

Muhammad Ismail, formerly a sepoy in the native infantry (N.I) and a zealous Wahabi missionary, had been confined in Madras under regulation II, 1819. He was earlier turned out of the lines in 1852, for preaching sedition. In 1857 also, he was suspected of similar activities in Gwalior. After that he went out to Burma, where he continued to preach Wahabi doctrine to the native troops. He was deported on that account, from Burma to the Calcutta and was again suspected of seditious activities in Vizyanagram in 1863. He was finally imprisoned in 1866.

Another noted Wahabi preacher, who had been active in Madras, particularly in the units of the N.I. stationed in Madras, was a man from Bengal named Ahmadullah. His activities had alarmed top military authorities. A circular was issued to the commanding officers to watch out for a bigoted Wahabi, a native of Bengal (Ahmadullah), whose objective is to stir up sepoys to seditions and who is engaged in travelling from place to place, where the native troops are, and carrying on seditious correspondence. Ahmadullah was arrested in 1869 in Raipur. It was reported that he was the *pir* of Ismail Khan, a noted Wahabi, who was arrested a few years ago for preaching sedition among the sepoys. (Our Indian Musalmans)

(1) A mistaken notion seems to have prevailed in some quarters that it will some how distract from the anti-British character of the Wahabi movement if it was maintained that the Wahabis in

were fighting for the vested interest, to regain their lost majestic glory. The Wahabis on the other hand, had no personal ambitions. They launched the *Jihad* movement to liberate their homeland. Syed Ahmad in his letters to the native and the neighbouring rulers had explicitly mentioned that the Wahabis had no territorial ambitions or an appetite for political power. But those who were leading the uprising of 1857, had an unsaturated hunger for personal glory and had no such noble ideas as that of the Wahabis (1). The uprising had taken an ugly turn of

the British India did not take much part in the rising of 1857. This notion is based on double fallacy, it ignores the history of the movement before 1857 and presumes that the character of the movement has to be judged on the basis of the activities of its followers during 1857-59. Secondly it is assumed that the Wahabis inside British India were somehow different from those in Frontiers. On the contrary both the groups were well integrated working under a centralised organisation. The set of persons closely inter-related worked in and outside British India. In fact the same persons Wilayat Ali, Inayat Ali and Yahya Ali and many others worked alternately at the two places. The open struggle on the Frontier was not possible without the support of the centres in British areas of control.

(Wahabi Movement in India, p-171-172)

(1) During the days of turmoil once Mian Sahib Syed Nazir Husain Muhaddis, went to the Red Fort. He saw that the elephants were being caparisoned for the Mughal princes to lead the rebel soldiers in the battle against the British. The princes were busy in frivolous talk with one another. Mian Sahib in a state of agony and distress went to the Mughal king Bahadur Shah Zafar, and said, "Majesty, will the princes go to the battle filed on these caparisoned elephants? The king cast a sorrowful glance at Mian Sahib and kept mum.

(Al Hayat-o-bad-Al Mamat)

(Biography of Mian Saheb Syed Nazir Husain Mohaddis Dehlvi)

hooliganism. The leaders had no authority and the commanders had lost their control over their soldiers. There was no discipline, no administration, no sense of duty and responsibility. Ravage and pillage had become order of the day. The rebel soldiers plundered their own countrymen. European women and children were being killed mercilessly (1). The Wahabis could not be a party to these perpetrations. It was against the Islamic teachings. On the contrary they tried to uphold the sublime moral values of Islam by providing protection to the innocent and the oppressed ones. Perhaps it was the reason that Mian Sahib did not sign the *Fatwa* of *Jihad* (2).

(1) Red Fort had been occupied by the rebel soldiers. One day when Mian Sahib was in the fort, a group of European women was brought by the rebel soldiers. The commander ordered them to be killed. Mian Sahib was aghast but he could not challenge the savage soldiers. In a deep anguish he remarked, "How could these people triumph who killed helpless and innocent women. Islam never allows such brutalities". (Al Hayat-o-bad-al Mamat)

(2) "Mian (friend) that was hooliganism, not Bahadur Shah's rule. The mob of Marauders had plundered and depredated the entire city of Delhi. There were no conditions of *Jihad* whatsoever. So we did not endorse the *Fatwa* of *Jihad*. What would have we endorsed and put our seal". Commenting on the above statement of Mian Sahib, Maulana Nazir Ahmad Imlavi writes, "The reason why he did not endorse the *Fatwa* of *Jihad* was that there were no condition of *Jihad* and commandership". The confrontation was going on without an Amir duly elected in accordance with the norms laid down by the Islamic Shariah. The rebel soldiers indulged in killing and plundering. They observed no discipline and had no regard for the enjoins of the Shariah relating to *Jihad*. So in his opinion, in the light of the Quran and the Hadith, it could not have been declared to be a *Jihad*. However when Gen. Bakht Khan took over the command and order was restored, Mian Sahib endorsed the new *Fatwa* for *Jihad*.
(Ahlehadis Aur Siyasat, p-286)

Mian Saheb Syed Nazir Husain Muhaddis who was the greatest Ahlehadis (Wahabi) scholar of his time and adorned the highest seat of Islamic learning and guidance in India, at Delhi, saved the life of a wounded English lady lying at a deserted place. She was groaning. Mian Saheb offered to take her to his house to nurse her. But she was too frightened to talk. Mian Saheb convinced her that he was a Muslim and his religion, Islam, forbids acts of oppression and injustice against anyone. The lady felt the warmth of sincerity and agreed to be carried to his house. He waited till the darkness of night covered the town. Then he brought her to his house and kept her in hiding for more than two months. During those days of turmoil (1857) it could be an act of foolhardiness to keep an English in hiding in ones house, particularly when the rebels had their encampment close to his house. But he performed the supreme Jihad endangering his own and his family's life. When peace and normalcy was restored in the city, the woman was safely escorted to the British camp.

(Al Hayat-o-bad-Al Mamat)

The Quran declares

من قتل نفساً بغير نفس أو قسداً في الأرض فكأنما قتل
الناس جميعاً و من أحيأها فكأنما أحيأ الناس جميعاً
(المائدة)

(Who so ever killed a human being not in retaliation of murder or to spread mischief in the land, it would be as if he killed all mankind and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind.

The above instance shows that how the Wahabis behaved during that period of chaos and kept high the standard of Islamic ideals of compassion and saving the life of the oppressed one at the risk of their own.

The British were apprehensive of the Wahabis. In Patna, the Wahabi centre for recruitment and training, was raided during the uprising of 1857. Tailer, the commissioner of Patna put Maulana Ahmadullah, Muhammad Hasan (Khalifa of Syed Ahmad) and Wazirul Haque, under detention. With their arrest, the activities of the Wahabi centre at Sadiqpur were paralysed. The supply of men and money to the Frontier was discontinued. This disrupted the activities of the Mujahidin. They had no alternative source of money and material. The discontinuation resulted in their starvation. They had to live in wretched poverty. Inayat Ali their leader, the one who was brought up in affluence died a death he was not born to.

The Wahabi leaders of Patna were later released. But the work of raising funds and recruiting the volunteers, suffered badly. The terror of a punitive action by the British authorities made it very much difficult for the donors and contributors to extend financial assistance to the Wahabis.

The Wahabis, whether on the Frontiers or elsewhere in British India, however, kept their mission active even under very unfavourable circumstances. Naturally when they were themselves afflicted with misery, they could not have posed a serious challenge to the alien rulers but they never compromised with nor surrendered to them.

Maulvi Jafar Ali Thanesari, a prominent Wahabi activist, mobilised the masses to rise against the colonial rulers, during the 1857 uprising (1). He and scores of other

(1) When the mutiny of 1857 broke out Jafar, of Thanesar, took of his most trustworthy disciples and repaired to the rebel camp.

Wahabi activists challenged the White rulers. The 1857 uprising saw a national determination to liberate their homeland. The uprising however, ended in failure. The Wahabis were not responsible for it. They had spearheaded the rebellion to the right direction. The native soldiers rose in revolt but the heterogeneous elements who had unfortunately, taken over the command of the rebels wrecked havoc on it. It was wrong to ask an emaciated, imbecile, unwilling and practically a deadwood like Bahadur Shah Zafar to head the rebellion. The mass movement was thus given in to the incompetent hands. Elsewhere, in Bengal, the Faraizis or the Wahabis revolutionaries of that region, were also active against the British. Dadu Mian, the Fraizi leader was arrested in Calcutta in 1857 and was released only in 1859. On the Frontier the Wahabis had intensified their activities during

Even in the unwanted work of fighting his force of character made him to be trusted with treasonable secrets. After the downfall of the rebels hopes in Delhi, he returned to his attorney business at Thanesar. (Hunter p-64)

In 1857 they (the Wahabi) openly formed a coalition against us with the Yusuf Zai and Panjtar tribes and came boldly on the camp of Lt. Horne, the assistant commissioner, who scarcely escaped with his life. (Hunter p-13)

During this time the Sittana colony ... had wisely avoided direct collision with our troops. But in 1857 they openly formed a coalition against us and had the audacity to call on the British authorities to help them in collecting their blackmail. (p-13)

Between 1850 and 1857 the Frontier disorder forced us to send 16 distinct expeditions aggregating thirty three thousand regular troops and between 1858 to 1863 the number rose to twenty separate expeditions aggregating 60,000 regular troops besides irregular auxiliaries and police. (Hunter, p-12)

1857 and persuaded the tribals to join them in their campaign against the aliens.

No doubt their manoeuvring failed but they taught a lesson to the alien traders that it is not easy to occupy a land without facing a fierce resistance from its people.

CAUSES OF FAILURE OF THE WAHABI MOVEMENT

It is indeed intriguing that a revolutionary movement launched with such high expectations and based on such lofty ideals, sublime principles and for such a noble cause, collapsed within a short period of six years (1826-1831 A.C.). This first phase of the movement was the formative and the most crucial one. The martyrdom of Syed Ahmad and Shah Ismail along with many other senior Mujahidin leaders on the battlefield of Balakot, was the end of this phase. The founder fathers of the Jihad movement were eliminated from the scene before an encounter with the real enemy.

The Wahabis, however, came face to face with the British after the annexation of Punjab to India in 1849. The uprising of 1857 had made the British realise that how this seemingly small group of Muslim revolutionaries could be a formidable threat to their rule in India. Wilayat Ali and Inayat Ali, the two great Wahabi leaders from the illustrious Sadiqpur (Patna) family, had resuscitated the movement. The Ambeyla war (1863) was the brightest chapter of the movement, when the Wahabis succeeded in forging an alliance with the tribals against the British. The mighty English army was entrenched in the valley and so precarious was their condition that the commander-in-chief of the British army in India, had to rush to the rescue of his beleaguered soldiers. The Wahabis gave such a fierce fight to the enemy that at one point, the Punjab government contemplated to order the entrenched army to retreat so as to save the soldiers from perdition.

The British, however, managed to win the battle by resorting to their treacherous diplomacy of buying the

venal tribal leaders. They were paid huge sum of money to part company with the Wahabis.

The Ambeyla war was the last of the encounters between the Wahabis and the British. The alien rulers did not allow the Wahabis to reconsolidate their power in the region. The small group of the Mujahidin, no doubt, remained in the locality but that was a symbolic presence. Their existence and the feeble resistance posed no threat to the British who had since captured the entire sub-continent and even beyond it up to Burma (Myanmar) and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and had a dominating influence on Afghanistan.

The causes of the Wahabi movement's failure are more than one. The very first one was the caprice and avarice of the tribals. They were bereft of the revolutionary spirit, which the movement demanded. Their main interest was to drive out the Sikhs from their territories. They did not share the fervour of the Mujahidin who had come to the Frontiers, leaving their families in India, to fight against colonialism. The tribals had no strong feelings against the alien rulers as they themselves lived in an independent region. They were afraid of the Sikhs but at the same time the tribal chiefs looked upon them as their protector against their rival chiefs.

Syed Ahmad's arrival in the region had alarmed the Sikhs. They apprehended his presence as a threat to their hegemony in that area. The Durrani of Peshawar and many other tribal chiefs joined hands with the Sikhs against Syed Ahmad as they saw in him, the end of their political authority. Yar Muhammad, the Durrani chief of Peshawar, tried to kill him by poisoning his food. The tribal chiefs of Hund Zaida and Amb openly clashed with the Wahabis. The fall of Peshawar to the Wahabis was one

of the most conspicuous successes of Syed Ahmad. Yar Muhammad was killed during the battle and the Mujahidin took the control of Peshawar. But this triumph also heralded the fall of the Wahabis. Syed Ahmad was caught in a situation where neither he could proceed forward nor retreat without harming the interest of his people. The killing of the tribal chiefs had exasperated their descendents, and had petrified the other tribal chiefs with the fear that the same might be their fate also. The Wahabis had established their authority in the principalities (they had captured) by defeating their defiant rulers. But the new dispensation proved to be disastrous to the movement itself. The Qazis and the collectors appointed by Syed Ahmad, behaved in a most irresponsible manner. In their zeal to enforce the Shariat laws, they flouted the very Islamic principle of love, tolerance and compassion. They were fanatic in their outlook, bigots in their approach and callous in the discharge of their official duties. They awarded severe punishment on minor offences and humiliated common men in public. They knew no mercy or forgiveness. They were oblivious of the Islamic way of reforms through preaching, persuasion and indoctrination. They wanted to enforce the Islamic laws instantly through coercion and torment and did not allow the people of a degenerate society a reprieve to reconcile themselves with the new dispensation. They only knew theology and were completely ignorant of human nature. The result was that the tribals who had once hailed the Wahabis as their emancipators, turned against them. The coercive measures adopted to recover *Zakat* and *Ushr* sealed the fate of the new rulers (1).

(1) The fanatic camp had other enemies besides the British troops. A constant source of irritation was levy of *Ushr*.

The collection of *Zakat* and *Ushr* by the Wahabis had deprived the local theologians of their main source of subsistence and they turned fiercely hostile to the Wahabi administration. The Wahabis on their part, did not care to accommodate these local mullah to ensure their economic rehabilitation. This aggrieved class who still commanded influence upon common men, were therefore, easily won over by the tribal chiefs opposed to Syed Ahmad.

Syed Ahmad's complacent attitude towards the disturbing reports of an impending strike against the Wahabi functionaries in Peshawar and elsewhere in the Frontier region was also responsible for the carnage. He brushed aside all the reports about the conspiracy being hatched by the tribals against his men. He refused to believe the persistent informations sent by the well wishers of the Wahabis. He did not even seek the opinion of his senior companions as to whether some action was called for in view of the horrifying reports pouring in from the reliable sources. The pogrom of the Wahabis was a fatal blow to the movement and Syed Ahmad's gullible overconfidence in the loyalty of the tribals was to a great extent responsible for it, so he was overtaken by scruples and compunction during the last days of his life.

He also failed to introduce a vigilance and intelligence system in the nascent Wahabi state. It gave the miscreants a free hand to conspire a vendetta against the Wahabi functionaries.

We have seen how it alienated the tribals from the Prophet (Syed Ahmad) himself and led to his destructions and death in 1831. When a clan refused title (*Ushr*) the fanatic camp descended enmass, cut the crops of the recalcitrant and carried off the harvest. In 1858, the tribals resisted this religious taxation, it culminated in an attack upon Sittana itself, in which the Fanatic leader fell.

(Hunter p-13)

The total dependence of the movement on the financial support from British India, was the weakest point of the Wahabis. It was nothing but a borrowed living and that too on uncertain means. Raising funds for the Wahabis was always a hazardous job. The antagonists of the movement, a hostile British administration, prevailing anarchy, unsafe routes and the open hostilities of the tribal chiefs particularly the Durrani, who invariably created hurdles in the smooth flow of men and money to the Wahabi camp, had made the lives of the Mujahidin extremely miserable. During the turmoil of 1857, when the collection and remittance of money had not been feasible, the Wahabis, on the camp, were living in abject poverty. They starved and perished. Those who consumed tree leaves to avoid starvation, suffered from serious intestinal diseases like blood dysentery etc. and died for want of treatment. They had no reserved food stock, no reserve funds for emergency. This shows lack of planning on the part of the managers of the movement. But the fact, however, is that the Wahabis got no time to lay the foundations of the administration on firm footings. From the very first day of their arrival in the region, they had been caught in an endless confrontation with the Sikhs and the hostile tribal chiefs. No doubt they had gone there to fight but not for such encounters which dissipated their power and paralysed the movement.

They tried their best to reform and regenerate the benighted tribal society. Some harsh measures were bound to be taken to enforce the reforms. But the tribal masses who had been living under degenerated social conditions for centuries and considered the social evils as their cherished traditions (mores), resisted the steps. They were instigated by the local mullahs and tribal chiefs who wanted to drive Syed Ahmad out of their localities. The reforms relating to the marriages of the girls and the

widows were radical in their nature. The greedy parents did not marry their daughters unless heavy amount was paid to them by the groom. Even after the marriage had been solemnized, the bride was not allowed to leave for her husband's house if the demanded money was not paid. Thousands of innocent girls were sacrificed on the altar of these savage social customs. The young widows were not allowed to remarry as it was considered to be against the honour and prestige of the family. The Wahabi movement was basically a socio-religious reformative movement. Syed Ahmad and his companions were not supposed to be mute spectators to such brute social evils. Strict orders were therefore issued by him that the brides who had not been allowed to leave for their husband's house due to default on the part of the grooms, be permitted to go to their husbands. The widows were given the right to remarry and were encouraged to marry the men of their choice. The reforms which were in the best interest of the tribal society, were unfortunately, opposed by the masses and the classes alike. The mullahs at the behest of the tribal chiefs issued *Fatwas* declaring that the Wahabis were infidels and should be driven out of the Frontiers.

When Syed Ahmad was chosen Amirul-Maumunin (chief of the faithful) and a general *Bai'at* (oath of allegiance) was taken by the tribals at his hand, he had also taken the *Bai'at* Shariah, that they all would abide by the enjoins of the Shariah and discard all the social customs and practices which were against the teachings of Islam. The tribal chiefs, the theologian and the masses were unanimous in their resolve to adhere to the enjoins of the Islamic Shariah. Now when he promulgated Islamic laws, there was no justification to oppose the steps. All were bounden by their vows (*Bai'at*) and opposing the enforcement of the Islamic law was a violation of the pledge. The malafide of the tribal chiefs and the

theologians was apparent. They were hell bent upon frustrating all the steps taken by the Wahabis. They were afraid of the social and religious reforms that would result in a mass awakening to the rights and the privileges Islam bestowed upon the believers. The tribal aristocracy and the religious monopoly rested on the crass ignorance of the people. Once there was an awareness among the masses, the days of the hegemony of the tribal chiefs and the Mullahs would have been numbered. The tribal conceit and zealotry did not allow them to listen to reason and they became a tool in the hands of the vested interest.

The Wahabis had to suffer badly in the vendetta. They were mercilessly butchered and tortured and were in a way extirpated from the tribal region, but they cannot be said to have failed in their mission. They laid down their lives for the noble cause of their religion and their homeland. Those who fell fighting, whether on the battlefield or in the narrow lanes of the tribal towns and villages, were all martyrs. They kindled the lamp of sacrifice with their blood and left a tremendous legacy for the posterity. They were the pioneers who launched an armed struggle to liberate their homeland. They made inroads into the British army and awakened the sepoys (native soldiers) to their obligation towards their nation and the country. The uprising of 1857 was, in fact, the fructification of the seeds of rebellion sown by the Wahabi activists. But alas, the great revolutionary uprising was crushed by the alien rulers, not by their own military prowess but through their loyal native rulers. The countrymen were not loyal to their own country. They themselves tightened the noose of slavery around their necks. As Syed Ahmad had in his letter addressed to Raja Hindu Rau (Regent of Gwalior) lamented that, "the traders from distant lands had become the rulers of the country (India) and the men of high position had been sitting

quietly in their retreats of obscurity”(1). The native rulers, the nobles and the men of high positions extended no help to the men of poverty and humility who had girded up the loin of courage to wage a war against the alien rulers for the liberation of their homeland and had no ambitions for power and position whatsoever. The main cause of the collapse of the 1857 uprising was not the indiscipline of the rebel soldiers but the treacherous role, played by the native rulers and the feudal lords.

The ill-equipped, poorly trained and semi-starved Wahabi Mujahidin on the Frontiers inflicted a crushing defeat upon the mighty British army and proved that the power of conviction, dedication and devotion to a noble cause can make a weak people strong enough to defeat a formidable enemy (2). Many a time, by Allah's will, a small group has defeated a mighty force.

(کم من فئة قليلة غلبت فئة كثيرة باذن الله)

(1) برائے سامی روشن و مبرهن است کہ بیگانگان بعید الوطن ملوک زمین و زمن گردیده اندو تا جران متاع فروش بہ پایہ سلطنت رسیدہ اند ... جوں اہل ریاست و سیاست در زاویہٴ خمول نشستہ اند ناچار چندے از فقر و مسکنت کمر ہمت بستہ۔ ریں جماعت ضعیف بنا بر خدمت دین رب العلمین ہر جستند و ہرگز ہرگز ازد نیا داران جاہ طلب نیستند ... وقتی کہ ہندوستان از بیگانگان خالی گردیدہ و تیر سعی ایشان بر ہدف مراد رسیدہ آئندہ مناصب ریاست و سیاست بر طالبین ایشان مسلم باد و بیخ سطوت و شوکت ایشان محکم شود۔
(سیرت سید احمد شہید ۲۸۹، ۹۰)

(2) James Okinleay wrote:

The whole country has been overrun by such men (Wahabi preachers). They have excited the peasantry and the Ambeyla Campaign has shown us that they are not to be despised and that the timid Bengali will, under certain conditions fight as fiercely as an Afghan.

(Hunter, p-111)

The Wahabis ignited the flame of rebellion in the hearts of millions of their countrymen, which ultimately developed into a raging fire and burnt the colonial edifice to ashes. Their activities in Bengal and Bihar inspired the revolutionaries, Muslims and non-Muslims alike to rise against the British imperialism. The great national leader Abul Kalam Azad was from Bengal. He was the scion of an ultra conservative *Sufi* family, fiercely opposed to the Wahabi-ism. Young Muhiuddin Ahmad (later Abul Kalam Azad) came into contact with Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf Jafri, Ranjur, Chief Maulvi Board of examiners Calcutta University. Ranjur was the son of the great Wahabi leader Maulana Yahya Ali of Sadiqpur, who was tried for high treason against the British government along with other Wahabi leaders and transported for life. Muhammad Yusuf (Ranjur) was an infant when his father was exiled to the Andamans. When he grew up, he inherited the revolutionary spirit of his illustrious father. Preaching and indoctrination were the main characteristics of the Wahabis. Besides his official academic duties, Muhammad Yusuf Jafri (Ranjur) had engaged himself in the activities of dissemination of the faith. He inculcated Wahabi ideals in his companions and friends. Mahiuddin Ahmad, although a young boy, was a scholar, a prodigy in his boyhood, his sharp intellect and erudition had astonished even the most prominent scholars like Shibli and Hali. He approached Ranjur to learn English. The contacts turned in to an intimate friendship. Ranjur indoctrinated the young scholar with Wahabi-ism or adherence to the pristine teachings of Islam and to reject all that was not enjoined by the Shariah. Thus the scion of a conservative family became a revolutionary theologian (1).

(1) During his stay in Calcutta, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad frequented Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf Jafri's house. Both had

Abul Kalam raised his forceful voice against the colonial rule. He had established close contacts with the Bengali revolutionaries and was actively involved in their plan of armed struggle against the British. Those Hindu revolutionaries of Bengal must have learned their first lesson in revolutionary activities from the Wahabis who had infested the entire Bengal with their anti-British campaign. As a Wahabi, Abul Kalam Azad, was more acceptable to them as the Wahabis were known for their aversion to the British rule.

Abul Kalam Azad gave a clarion call to his countrymen, particularly, the Muslims to rise against the alien rulers. The call was in fact, an echo of the call of Shah Abdul Aziz, Shah Ismail and Syed Ahmad. He revived the Wahabi mission and like his great predecessor Shah Ismail Shaheed, who had awakened the Muslims in the early 19th century through his writings and discourses, he also followed the same course in the early 20th century. Through his Urdu journal "Al-Hilal" and his heart-warming speeches, he infused a new spirit in to the Muslims. We may therefore, call him Shah Ismail of the 20th century.

In short the Wahabi movement gave a number of towering personalities to the nation. Shah Ismail, Syed Ahmad, Wilayat Ali, Inayat Ali, Mian Syed Nazir Hussain, Nawab Siddiqui Hasan Khan of Bhopal, Sir Syed, Samaulah Amritsari and Abul Kalam Azad. This galaxy forms the brightest chapter of our freedom struggle. The first commander of the patriot warriors of the pioneer movement was the great Wahabi leader Shah Ismail Shaheed and when the movement reached its point of

long sessions of mutual discussion. Maulana Azad's sister whose *non-de-plume* was 'Abru', also used to come to see

culmination, it was again a great Wahabi leader (Abul Kalam Azad) who negotiated the transfer of power with the British. Thus the first and the last chapters of the struggle for freedom were written by the Wahabis and of course the intervening period was not devoid of these fighters. In view of the above, can anyone say that the Wahabi movement was a failure?

Maulvi Muhammad Yusuf's wife. Maulana Jafri's children addressed Maulana Azad as Azad *Chacha* (Azad Uncle). Maulana Azad was a man of insight and circumspection and had a disposition to research and literary permit. His long association with Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Jafri must have influenced him.

(Tazkera-e-Sadiqa, p 142-43)

HUNTER'S BOOK

The seizure of the documents from the ravaged Wahabi camps on the Frontiers had exposed the Wahabi activities in India. Wahabi leaders were arrested, tried for high treason and sedition against the Queen. Most of them were sentenced to death, later it was commuted to transportation for life. The British were aware of the role played by the Wahabi activists in fomenting discontent and sedition among the native soldiers of the British army, which resulted in the uprising of 1857. But the vast network of the movement that had covered the entire country, had stunned them.

W.W Hunter (William Wilson Hunter) was a senior British civil servant in Bengal. He was a learned man but full of imperial arrogance, like most of his colleagues in the colonial bureaucracy. It was but natural. The British for the first time in their history, had established a colony and that too in a country which was much larger, much prosperous, much more populous and even more civilised than the tiny Island on the British channel.

The humiliating defeat of the mighty British army in the Ambeyla war (1863) had sent shock waves across the British India and London also felt the jerks of the tremor. The British authorities in India were in a state of exasperation. The seemingly insignificant Wahabis had made the formidable British army to lick the dust. The trauma of the sepoy revolt of 1857 was still fresh in their memory when they suffered another staggering blow at the hands of the Wahabis. Their injured ego and bleeding

conceit had made them ferocious and fiercely vindictive. Now the term Wahabi had become synonymous with rebel and every Muslim was suspected to be a Wahabi or their sympathizer.

Hunter's book "Our Indian Musalmans, Are they bounden by their faith to rebel against the Quran", was written against this backdrop. The theme of the book was the Fatwa of Shah Abdul Aziz, issued after the British had occupied Delhi in 1803 A.C. Since Delhi was the Capital of Mughal Empire, its fall implied that virtually the entire country had gone under the colonial rule. Shah Abdul Aziz, the greatest theologian of his time, issued the *fatwa* declaring that India was no longer a Darul Islam. After the fall of Delhi it had become Darul Harb (a country ruled by alien infidels). The Muslims were supposed to fight for the liberation of their homeland or migrate to any other country. This was the genesis of the *Jihad* movement, spearheaded by the Wahabis. The movement had captivated the minds of the Indian Muslims and everyone was eager to see his homeland liberated.

Hunter had studied all the aspects of the movement, made extensive use of the documents and evidences produced by the prosecution against the Wahabis in their trials. He does not conceal his contempt for the freedom fighters whom he calls "The Traitors" and the fanatics (1). He ridicules the *fatwa* issued in favour of the British by the sycophant Muslim scholars and looks with suspicious at the declaration of the Shia community supporting the colonial rulers, and refers to their belief in Taqaiyah which makes their statement dubious. He quotes

(1) While the more fanatical of the Musalmans have thus engaged the overt sedition, the whole Muslim community is openly deliberating on the obligation to rebel. During the past

from the books of Islamic jurisprudence to prove that India was Darul Harb as all the conditions set out in the *fatwa* of Shah Abdul Aziz and Maulvi Abdul Haie, were prevalent in the country and the decrees of the Mecca scholars and the Bengal Mohammadan society that India was still Darul Islam, were not tenable.

The book was first published in 1870 when the atmosphere was still fraught with suspicion and distrust. The provocative style of writing, rabid criticism of the Wahabis, vindictive outlook and negative approach of the writer, could have exacerbated the already vitiated

nine months the leading newspaper in Bengal have filled their front columns with discussion on the duty of the Musalmans to wage war against the Queen...some how or the other every Musalman seems to have found himself called on to declares his faith to state in the face of his Co-religionists whether he will or he will not contribute to the traitors camp on the frontiers. (p-2)

The Musalmans of India are and have been for many years a source of Chronic danger to the British power. (p-3)

... The whole Quran is based on the conception of the Musalmans as a conquering and not as a conquered people. (p-104)

(i) But welcome as such an assurance may be. I cannot forget that the Shia Muslims admit a principle of religions compromise. "Takiyah" literally guarding oneself (Pious fraud) which rather weakens the strength of any engagement they may make with us infidels. (p-87)

(ii) If India were dejure a country of Islam as the Meccan law doctors have insidiously try to make out the position of our Musalman subject (the orthodox one) would feel compelled to rise against us to make it a country of Islam de facto ... I

atmosphere. Sir Syed, therefore came forward to refute the charges levelled by Hunter in his book. He vehemently denied that the Wahabis had waged a war against the British and asserted that the Jihad movement was launched against the Sikhs.

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) was one of the few Indian Muslims, who had been serving in the subordinate judiciary under the company's dispensation. He was a man of deep insight and had realised that the existing political system in India was crumbling and the new system was bound to take root. The Indians should therefore, opt for a better and vibrant system and reject the antiquated one. During the uprising of 1857, he saved the lives of many beleaguered Europeans endangering his own life. With his selfless services to his alien masters, he was able to win their confidence and it helped him a lot in his endeavours to make the British change their attitude towards Indian Muslims and particularly the Wahabis, the sect he himself belonged to. He was loyal but not subservient to the British. He never compromised his personal prestige and national interest. The British offered him a *Jagir* (Fief) in recognition of his meritorious services to the British people and the government but he declined it. He had not saved the lives of the helpless people for the sake of any reward or compensation. He had discharged his duty as a Muslim and as a responsible Indian. But at the same time, he did not remain a mute spectator to the brutalities perpetrated by the British against his compatriots. He put forward his bold analysis of the uprising of 1857, in his remarkable book '*Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind* (Causes of the Indian Rebellion) and put the blame squarely upon the wrong policies of the

therefore view with extreme suspicion the declaration of doctors of Mecca when they declare that India was a country of Islam.

Company and the callous attitude of the British politicians in London. The stark realities put forth in the book infuriated the imperial Lords. Had there been someone other than Sir Syed, he would have been sent to the gallows for his temerity of pointing an incriminating finger at the British functionaries (as Diwan Anand Kumar was crucified for arraigning Clive). But his past services saved him. The sane among the politicians, counselled a dispassionate study of the contents of the book and rectify the past mistakes. The book made the British realise the need for introspection and to take remedial measures. Sir Syed was a staunch Wahabi (as the Ahlehadis or the Salafis were known those days). He never concealed the fact that he belonged to the Wahabi sect. The British were deadly against the Wahabis. He therefore declared that he was a Wahabi but a loyal British subject too (1).

Hunter's book was an attempt to scratch the healing wounds. Sir Syed knew the serious repercussions of such an ill-conceived attempt. So he wrote a comprehensive "Review" on the book refuting Hunter's theory that the Muslims were bounden by their faith to rebel against the British rule in India and make it Darul Islam again. Defending the Wahabis he claimed that they had gone to the Frontier to fight the Sikhs. Since Syed Ahmad, Shah Ismail and many eminent Wahabi leaders fell fighting the Sikhs in the battle of Balakot, prima facie his assertion appeared to be true. He tried to substantiate his point by circumventing the facts. Hunter's book was based on documentary evidences and investigations conducted by the British intelligence officials. It was not possible to refute or cover up those facts. Sir Syed had no

(1) Sir Syed used to call himself Neem Chadha (hard core) Wahabi.
(Mauj-e-Kausar, p-69)

such convincing evidences or proofs. He had to rely upon the emotional arguments or circumstantial evidences and the distorted facts. He was however, sincere in his endeavours and wanted to save the situation. He had witnessed the brutalities perpetrated by the British upon the Muslims after the collapse of the uprising of 1857. They had ruthlessly crushed them and now the pulverized community could not withstand a fresh tide of suspicion and distrust. Sir Syed was the only towering personality in the post 1857 India who had the guts to challenge the top British bureaucracy. So he refuted all the wild charges and defended the Wahabis in a forceful way (1).

(1) (i) The Wahabis are very rigid in their religious matters and true to their faith. They never deviate from their principles. The people I am referring to, have left their families and the properties in India in the custody of the British government of India. It is absolutely impermissible in their religion to fight against those who have been guarding their families and the properties. So if they are killed fighting against the English they will not get even the fragrance of paradise, nor will get the status of martyr and will be considered as the sinners.

(ii) No doubt Syed Ahmad and correctly speaking, Maulvi Muhammad Ismail concentrated their attention on the reform of their religion to the possible extent as many un-Islamic beliefs and practices had crept into the Indian Muslims faith. Dr. Hunter is right when he says that Syed Ahmad wanted to establish his reformatory hold in every Indian district. But it is absolutely wrong to say that he wanted to extirpate the creed of the British government.

Syed Ahmad was the leader of the Muslims but he was not an orator. Maulvi Muhammad Ismail was an elegant preacher. He was such a charismatic orator that his sermons aroused great enthusiasm among the audience. But he never uttered a single word that might cause slightest anger against the British

It was not Sir Syed alone who tried to camouflage the facts relating to the Wahabi Movement, many other eminent Wahabis who had themselves undergone trial and were tormented at the Andamans, when they compiled their memoirs after their return from the Island, also went the same way. They gave a detailed account of the sufferings the great Wahabi leaders, like Maulana Yahya Ali of Sadiqpur, had to undergo in the prison cell and on Andaman Island. The horrifying tales make the readers' hair stand on end. But these writers, Maulvi Muhammad

government among his co-religionists. Once in Calcutta while he was delivering a lecture and exhorting the audience to perform Jihad against the Sikhs, interjecting his speech, someone posed a question that why did he not exhort the people to fight the English, after all they were also the infidels. Maulvi Muhammad Ismail answered that since we were the subject of the British and lead a peaceful life under their rule, so we were bounden under the enjoins of our religion not to perform Jihad against them. (p-142)

There is nothing common between what is Wahabiat and the people of the Frontier. It is highly impossible that the hilly people and the Wahabis could have joined hands to hatch a conspiracy. In 1824 the Wahabis went to the Frontier area and decided to wage a war against the Sikhs and attain martyrdom. Since the Frontier people were against the religious belief of the Wahabis, they could not persuade them to embrace their creed. But as they had been persecuted by the Sikhs, so they joined the Wahabis in their plan to wage a war against the Sikhs. But these people were inflexible in their religious belief, so they betrayed the Wahabis and joined hands with the Sikhs and Maulvi Muhammad Ismail and Syed Ahmad were martyred.

I am sure through this article (The Review) I have substantiated my point that the Jihad activities that Dr. Hunter has described to be against the British government, were in fact to defeat the Sikhs. (Maqalat-e-Sir Syed, p-153)

Jafar Thanesari in his *Tarikh-e-Ajiba* and Maulvi Abdul Rahim of Sadiqpur in his *Tazkira-e-Sadiqa*, after narrating their tales of horror, shower praises on the British authorities for their compassion and humane behaviour. In the face of the tales of torment and torture, this encomium sounds hollow.

Muhammad Jafar in his attempt to prove that the Wahabi movement was raised against the Sikhs, went to the extent that he distorted the text of Syed Ahmad's letters. Mehr in his book has quoted the instances of such manipulations by putting the original text and the distorted one in juxtaposition. Abdul Rahim also tried to twist the facts.

However, all these activists were sincere in their desperate attempt. They anyhow, wanted to appease the mighty white lords. The Wahabi movement had finally collapsed and there was no hope of its revival nor it could pose any threat to the colonial rule in India. These Wahabi leaders of yester-years, were now trying to come to term with the changed circumstances and accept the ground realities.

But the facts are facts; they cannot be concealed or camouflaged for long. All these writers knew that what they were saying was not the truth. Nowhere in his letters, Syed Ahmad expressed his intention to challenge the Sikhs. (1) He sought the help of Ranjit Singh in his fight

(1) One of the general prevalent misconceptions about the Wahabi movement is that it was purely religious and directed against the Sikhs. This is not only over-simplification of its whole history, but also a deliberate distortion of its true aims and objects. ...the struggle of the Wahabis continued till long after the Sikhs had ceased to exist as a political entity. It is true,

against the alien rulers. If he had the plans to fight the Sikhs, how could he seek the help from an enemy, he was going to fight against.

Ranjit Singh was a shrewd and sagacious ruler. He had offered vast territory on the banks of Indus River to the Wahabis as a gesture of peace and friendship. It would be naive to suppose that he was unaware of the real designs of the Wahabis. As a matter of fact, Syed Ahmad's explicit and repeated assertion that he had no territorial ambitions and his mission was to drive out the alien traders who had become the rulers of India, and restore the power to the deserving ones, had convinced the Sikhs of his bonafide. Ranjit Singh held him in high esteem and admired his valour and manliness.

If the Wahabi movement was launched against the Sikhs, then why the peasantry from Bengal and Bihar joined it so fervently. They were not mercenaries nor paid recruits. They were Mujahidin (fighter for a noble cause) who braved hardships, starved, faced massacre, underwent untold miseries but never deserted the movement. They had been fighting against the colonial repression in their home towns. The British had usurped their lands and they had been deprived of their only source of subsistence. They were a ruined lot and had been seething with anger. When the Wahabis gave a call for Jihad against the colonial rulers, they saw a ray of hope in the call, and

however, that during the lifetime of Syed Ahmad, the N.W. Frontier was selected as the base of operation, and the first round began with a struggle against the Sikhs.....whose domain lay on the main route of Syed Ahmad...

(ii) The conflict with the Sikhs was an accidental circumstance and it did not present the true aim of the movement.

(Wahabi Movement in India, p 325,326)

responded overwhelmingly. The Wahabi leaders had assured then that once the alien rulers were defeated and India was liberated, their lands will be restituted to them (1). This was the charm that had mainly attracted the peasants of the far off lands of Bengal and Bihar to go to the Frontiers to fight the British rulers. Had the Wahabi movement been launched to fight the Sikhs, why should the Bengali and Bihari peasants have joined the movement in thousands. The Sikhs had not occupied their home land (Bengal and Bihar). They had not usurped their lands to cause their economic ruin. So they (the peasantry) had no grouse against them. Why they should have laid down their lives fighting those who had caused no harm to them.

Syed Ahmad in his letters had categorically stated that his mission was to fight the alien traders of the distant lands who had become the rulers of our country. The Sikhs were neither alien, nor traders. They had not come from far off lands. They were the original inhabitants of Punjab and were the farmers (the peasantry). No one could have driven them out of their homeland. The *Fatwa* of Shah Abdul Aziz clearly mentions the word, *Nasara* (Christians) and *Frangi* (the English). It was issued when the British had occupied Delhi, the capital of Mughal Empire, in 1803. The Sikhs had been ruling Punjab long before and no *fatwa* was ever issued to get it liberated. The words

(1) Okinley writes that, Maulana Inayat Ali had ignited an inflammatory passion against the British among his companions. The Mujahidin had a daily schedule of military parade. Sometimes it was held twice a day. Poetic compositions on the superiority of *Jihad* were recited during the parade. On Friday, after the congregational prayer, sermons were delivered highlighting the bliss and comforts of life in the paradise. They were exhorted to wait with patience and perseverance for the

alien traders of distant lands have specific significance in this context.

The Wahabi activists had made inroads into the Sikh army. They motivated the Muslim soldiers to join the Mujahidin to fight the alien traders, but no Wahabi activists ever preached sedition against Ranjit Singh.

Sir Syed may have been unaware of Syed Ahmad's letters to Ranjit Singh and Raja Hindu Rau and unwittingly misconstrued the message of the Wahabis. Hunter was forthright in his assessment of the aims of the Wahabi movement. Sir Syed's apologetic approach was the need of the hour. The noble soul, the great protagonist of the Muslims, vindicated their activities and was eager to vouch for their loyalty to the Queen. May his soul rest in peace he was sincere to the core.

Today after the passage of more than 100 years and under the changed circumstances, when our minds are not obfuscated by colonial repression, and an independent and dispassionate study of the events is possible, it has been established that the facts were distorted to appease the alien masters albeit with a sincere desire to espouse the cause of the country and the community.

Ghulam Rasul Mehr, Dr. Qayamuddin and other scholars deserve our compliment for their in-depth exploration of the subject and setting the controversy at rest.

day when the promised hour of the conquest of British India
will be heralded. Mehr (Sargazasht-e-Mujahidin)

SHAIKHUL ISLAM ALLAMA SANAULLAH OF AMRITSAR (1868-1948)

He was the last of the colossal personalities of the Indian Ahlehadis community. His father Khizar Ju, a Kashmiri, was a petty trader of Kashmiri woolen clothes and had settled in Amritsar. He died when Sanaullah was in his early boyhood. The poor orphan boy had to work as a darning to earn his livelihood. A scholar happened to notice his sharp intellect and wonderful memory and advised him to go in quest of knowledge. So, he joined a Madarsa in Amritsar. After completing secondary stage of education he went to Delhi for higher studies in theology. His teacher, in Delhi, was the great scholar of Hadith, Mian Saheb Syed Nazir Husain. He also studied at Deoband and was a student of Maulana Mahmudul Hasan. Having qualified in all the disciplines of theology, philosophy, logic, mathematics and medicine, he went back to Amritsar. He started his career as a teacher. He was very much interested in the comparative study of religions and had thoroughly studied the scriptures of other faiths. He had an innate proclivity to polemics. Those were the days when the Christian missionaries had launched their campaign of propagation and proselytization. Muslims were their main target. They challenged the Muslim scholars to polemical confrontation. Young Maulana Amritsari accepted their challenge. His erudition, versatility and articulation made him the most sought after scholar to represent the Muslims. Many prominent priests and preachers of Trinity, had to concede their defeat. Now, he devoted himself to espouse the cause of Islam and to rebut and refute the charges of the

antagonists against Islam and the Messenger of Islam (PBUH). He successfully defended his religion and silenced all the detractors. Like the missionaries, the Arya Samajis were also active in their anti-Islamic campaign. Swami Dayanand, the founding father of Arya Samaj, in his renowned work 'Satyarath Prakash', had criticized certain verses of The Quran. Allama Amritsari in his book 'Haq Prakash' critically examined all his objections and proved that Swamiji's objections were due to his ignorance of Arabic language and grammar. He was unable to comprehend the real sense of the verses. When another Arya Samaji Scholar authored a provocative book entitled "Rangila Rasul", the Muslims protested against this outrageous attempt. Allama Amritsari immediately compiled his book Muqaddas Rasul (The Holy Messenger) and established, on the basis of historical evidences, that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was a man of immaculate character and all the aspersions cast by the author were false and absurd.

Qadianiat (Qadianism) was the new cult expounded by one Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (Panjab) He was infact a protégé of the British Colonialism who was encouraged by the white rulers to create dissension and dissipation among the Indian Muslims. The Jihad movement launched by the Wahabis had unnerved the British. The indefatigable passion of a fight to the finish that had been sparked by the clarion call for Jihad and the humiliating defeat of the British army in the Ambeyla war had compelled the English to have recourse to their treacherous diplomacy. The Mirza of Qadian was persuaded to distract the Muslims from the revolutionary activities and cause to extinguish the spirit of Jihad. He thereof, proclaimed himself to be a prophet. The one who had been divinely commissioned to guide the people. He attracted the gullible Muslim masses and

declared that Jihad was now forbidden. He exhorted his followers to be loyal to the British rulers and fight in defence of the empire. This was what the British had desired. The Mirza had himself confessed that he was the self-planted sapling of the British. His pretentious proclamations, which he termed as revelation and afflatus, exasperated the Muslims. They were vociferous in their protests against his propagations. But it was Allama Sanaullah Amritsari who challenged him and exposed him by pointing out contradictions in his utterances. He analysed all his predictions and prophecies and proved that they were at variance with the facts. The Mirza first tried to play down the objections of his critic. But Allama Amritsari persistently chased him and went all the way To Qadian to have a face-to-face dialogue with the pseudo prophet. So firm was his grip and so stunning were his objections that the Mirza was dumb founded. He lost his patience and in a fit of hysteric outburst showered invectives upon Allama Amritsari and all the Muslims who did not believe in his prophet hood. But this outrage failed to provoke the great scholar. He had a wonderful sense of humour and was known for his repartees. In his weekly journal "Ahlehadis" he regularly published Mirza's utterances with his sarcastic comments. His weekly was a very popular Urdu journal and had a large circulation. His comments and refutation of Mirza's pretentious proclamations and prophecies disillusioned many of his followers and they returned to the fold of Islam. The Mirza was enraged. His sophistry and pretensions were losing their appeal and attraction. He was desperate and invoked Allah's curse on Allama Amritsari saying, "May the liar perish in the life time of the veracious". The invocation was answered and behold! The prophet himself died the next year (1908) while Allama Amritsari lived for forty years (1948) and was looked upon as a symbol of Divine

grace and veracity. After this miraculous event he was called Fatch Qadian (The Victor of Qadian).

Allama Amritsari not only challenged the anti-Islamic forces but he was much more active against the obscurantist elements among the Muslims. Those who invoke the blessings of their saints (Aulia) besides Allah and practise innovations (Shirk-e-Bida) are an strayed lot. Islam means what is enshrined in the Quran and the Sunnah {precepts and practices of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH)}. All that is not enjoined and allowed by the Shariah (Islamic code) is unIslamic and must be denounced and discarded. Pristine monotheism is the bed-rock of our faith. Allama Amritsari, the great Salafi (Ahlehadis) scholar was in the forefront of those who crusaded against such un-Islamic practices and preachings. Thousands of Muslims were guided to the right path thanks to his untiring efforts. But those who survived and depended on such un-Islamic practices, were furious and retaliated violently. They seduced their gullible followers to do away with him. One Qamar Baig, attacked him with a pick axe. He was seriously wounded but survived. There was a countrywide protest against this brutality. The culprit was arrested and sentenced for four years. He was a poor man. There was no one to support his family. Those who had exploited and abused him for their nefarious designs turned their backs on the poor man's family. They had been starving and there was no one to come to their help. Allama Amritsari came to know of their plight. He was moved. Why should his family members suffer for his misdeed, he asked and took upon himself the maintenance of his family? When Qamar Baig came out of the prison he was told of the noble gesture of the saintly scholar. He fell at his feet and begged his pardon.

Apart from editing his weekly journal 'The Ahlehadis', he published and edited some other journals like Maraqqai Qadiani, The Musalman, etc. He authored and compiled more than 100 books, which include booklets, treaties and commentary on the Quran both in Urdu and Arabic running in to thousands of pages.

He was active in the public life also, participated in the Khilafat movement, was one of the founder members of the Jamiatul Ulema-e-Hind and also played a pivotal role in the formation of All India Ahlehadis conference (in 1906) the main and the representative organisation of the Indian Ahlehadis community. It was an apolitical body wedded to the socio-religious reform of the Muslims. Allama Amritsari was chosen its general secretary and shouldered this responsibility till he was forced to emigrate to Pakistan when during the communal frenzy his only son Maulana Ataullah was killed. The Allama was nearing 80. His library, printing Press and Book Depot were also set ablaze in Amritsar. Dejected and broken hearted he left for Lahore. The trauma had shattered him. He did not survive long, suffered a severe attack of paralysis and died in February 1948. He was a versatile genius, a dynamic leader, a prolific writer, an excellent orator, extraordinary activist of Ahlehadis (Wahabi) movement in India and the valiant defender of the Faith. With his passing away the last link of the golden chain of the great scholars and dynamic leaders was severed. He forms one of the brightest chapters of the Ahlehadis movement in India. The cherished memory of his services is the most valuable asset of the Ahlehadis community of the Indian sub-continent.

JIHAD

Jihad is the most maligned term in the modern political lexicon. Notwithstanding its noble objectives, it has been made synonymous with terrorism, thanks to the western propaganda and those who misuse it to camouflage their personal and political ambitions.

The west has had a vested interest in projecting it as a misnomer (1).

Jihad, *Jehd* and *Ijtihad* have the same root, meaning striving earnestly. In the religious sense *Jihad* stands for striving in the cause of Allah (*Jihad fi-sabil ilullah*). This striving includes discourses, preaching, propagation, dissemination of the Divine message, imparting religious education, indoctrinating moral values, making physical efforts, extending moral and financial help to those engaged in the diffusion of knowledge and of course, taking up arms if necessary, to uphold the Truth. However, an invasion, conquest, feudal wrangling and bloodshed, a civil war, terrorism or vendetta are not *Jihad*.

(1) In India, in the 19th century, when the Wahabis had launched the *Jihad* movement against the British, the alien rulers tried hard to alienate the Muslims from the revolutionaries. In 1857, when the rebel soldiers had occupied Delhi, a *fatwa* for *Jihad* was issued by the theologians of the capital, making it obligatory on all able-bodied Muslims to fight the colonial rulers. The *fatwa* had such an overwhelming effect on the Muslims that the British were frightened. No doubt, they crushed the rebel soldiers and the *Jihad* movement but they could not crush the spirit of *Jihad*. So, they resorted to their treacherous policy of distracting the Muslims from *Jihad*. One,

The Quran and the Hadith, have clearly defined the principles of *Jihad*. It is a multifaceted term and varies from person to person. For women, Hajj pilgrimage is their *Jihad*, as this journey of spiritual edification entails great hardships. Serving one's elderly parents is also *Jihad*. Once a man sought Messenger of Allah's (PBUH) permission to perform *Jihad*. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) enquired if he had anyone to look after. The man said that his old mother was there. He exhorted him to take care of his mother, it was his *Jihad*. (Bukhari)

The Quran has abundantly used the term, *Jihad* (1). In most of the cases it implies to striving and where fighting is explicitly commanded, the term *Qital* has been used. Thus, *Jihad* and *Qital* are two distinct terms. Striving in the cause of Allah with one's physical might, intellectual faculties and wealth is also *Jihad*. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, 'Perform *Jihad* with your wealth, with your hands and with your tongue'. The

Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian was encouraged to project himself as a prophet. One of the salient points of his creed was that he declared *Jihad* to be unlawful. He earnestly exhorted his followers to be loyal to the British and fight in defence of the Empire.

(1) There are two kinds of *Jihad*. (i) Striving to reform a degenerate society. Making efforts for the social upliftment and religious and moral regeneration of people. This is the supreme *Jihad* and its other aspects, fighting or armed struggle against persecution and repression, rest on this very foundation.

Propagation of the Islamic message is also the supreme *Jihad* (striving). Allah Almighty ordained His Messenger (PBUH) in the Quran, "O, Messenger, strive against the non-believers and the hypocrites".

يا ايها النبي جاهد الكفار والمنافقين

wealth spent by his companions (May Allah be pleased with them) to further the cause of Islam, was the performance of *Jihad*. Abu Bakr Siddiq used to buy slaves and manumitted them in the name of Allah. Thus, he performed *Jihad* by means of his wealth. The poetic compositions of Hassan bin Thabit, in defence of Islam and in support of Allah's Messenger (PBUH) were also the performance of *Jihad*. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) praised him and invoked Allah's blessings on his poetic calibre.

The Quran commands the believers to perform *Jihad* (striving) and *Qital* (fighting) as the situation may demand. But whether *Jihad* or *Qital*, one is supposed to be above one's personal interest and ambitions. It should be absolutely in Allah's cause and for His pleasure and approbation. Once during a battle (*Jihad*), Ali bin Abu Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) knocked down an enemy warrior and sat on his chest to kill him. The man spat on his face. Ali immediately jumped off his chest and let him escape. Someone asked, why did he let him go

and also, He said, "Strive against them; an extreme striving", i.e. through the verses of the Quran. **وجاهد بهم به جهاداً كبيراً**. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) performed this supreme *Jihad* (**جهاداً كبيراً**) through his preaching and propagation based on reason and natural facts. Dissemination of the Divine Message, is therefore, the supreme *Jihad* and fighting (**جهاد بالسيف**) is an adjunct to it.

فلا تطع الكافرين وجاهد بهم به جهاداً كبيراً (الفرقان ٥٢)

Honesty and trustworthiness are also the traits of *Jihad* and one must be *Amin* (trustworthy). Helping one another in the religious and worldly affairs, exhorting patience and perseverance, observing discipline, striving for learning are the pre requisites of *Jihad*. But for these qualities, there cannot be an accomplished *Jihad*. Allah said, "O, ye the believers, save

after he had overpowered him. Ali said, "I was fighting in the cause of Allah, with no personal enmity against him. But, when he spat on my face, I was afraid that if I killed him, it will be an act of personal vendetta".

Steadfastness and forbearance are the main characteristics of a *Mujahid*. The earlier Muslims suffered badly at the hands of pagans of Makkah for embracing Islam. But they were firm and steadfast and underwent the ordeal with perseverance. They sacrificed their lives, had to leave their homes but refused to return to paganism. They were forced to flee Makkah. Some of them migrated to Eithopia. There also the pagans of Makkah chased them.

your selves and your families from the fire of the hell,

يا ايها الذين آمنوا قوا انفسكم واهليكم نارا and also said, "Those who don't know can not be equal to those who know". هل يستوى الذين يعلمون والذين لا يعلمون

These two verses lay emphasis on acquiring knowledge, imbibing moral values and maintaining discipline. To adorn oneself with knowledge and moral and spiritual merits, also comes within the purview of *Jihad*.

Jihad-el-Ada (Shaikh Abdul Rahman Nasir Al Saadi)

The following are some of the Quranic verses which distinctly command for *Jihad* {striving (A)} and *Qital* {fighting (B)}:

١- والذين جاهدو فينا لنهدينهم سبلنا (عنكبوت ٢٩)

A.1) Those who strive for us, we guide them to our path.

٢- ومن جاهد فانما يجاهد لنفسه ان الله غنى عن العالمين

2) Whosoever strives, he strives for himself. Allah is absolutely independent of all His creatures.

٣- وجاهدو في سبيل الله حق جهاد

3) And strive for Allah with the endeavour, which is His right.

٤- وجاهدو باموالكم وانفسكم في سبيل الله

4) And strive in the cause of Allah with your wealth and lives.

They petitioned before the Eithopian king Negus, for their extradition, as according to them, they (the Muslims) were apostates. The just king, however, refused to oblige them, without having given an opportunity to the Muslims to defend themselves before him. Jafar bin Abi Talib, one of the emigrants, explained the Islamic faith and gave a detailed account of the persecution the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and his followers had undergone in Makkah. The enlightened Christian king felt sorry for the Muslims and rejected the demand of the pagans. He was convinced that it was a true religion, so he embraced Islam. Jafar bin Abi Talib, performed supreme *Jihad* (dissemination of the Divine Message) and Islam won the first major victory outside Arabia.

When Allah's Messenger (PBUH) emigrated to Medinah and most of the Muslims followed him, the pagans of Makkah, launched an attack on Madinah to extirpate them, but the Muslims steadfastly stood against the aggression, performed *Jihad* and repulsed the attack. Allah appreciated their steadfastness (1).

٥. ولكن الرسول والذين آمنوا معه جاهدوا بأموالهم وأنفسهم

5) But the Messenger and those who believe with him, strive with their wealth and lives.

١. وقاتلوهم حتى لا تكون فتنة

B. 1) And fight them, until persecution is no more.

٢. وقاتلوا في سبيل الله الذين يقاتلونكم ولا تعتدوا إن الله لا يحب المعتدين

2) And fight in the cause of Allah, with those who fight you and transgress not. Allah does not like the transgressors.

٣. وقاتلوا المشركين كافة كما يقاتلونكم كافة

3) And fight against the polytheists collectively as they fight against you collectively (9:40).

(1) The first Quranic verse granting permission to the believers

Upholding the Truth in the face of a tyrant ruler is the supreme *Jihad* (j). Islam attaches greatest importance to it. Declaring the truth at the risk of one's life is no doubt the supreme sacrifice one can offer in the cause of Allah. This is the true spirit of *Jihad*. History bears testimony that Muslims scholars performed this supreme *Jihad*, earned the wrath of tyrant rulers but saved many innocent lives (A). While launching *Jihad* (fighting) certain conditions are to be fulfilled. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) did not permit an attack in the darkness of night. Even if he reached the battlefield he would wait till the break of dawn. He strictly prohibited to kill women and children during fighting. Whenever he dispatched an army he would invariably exhort the warriors to fear Allah and never transgress the limits set by Him.

to fight against repression, persecution and aggression, is said to be the following one:

اذن للذين يقاتلون بانهم ظلموا وان الله على نصيرهم لقدير. ان الذين اخرجوا من ديارهم بغير حق الا ان يقولوا ربنا الله. لولا دفع الله الناس بعضهم ببعض لهدمت صوامع وبيع وصلوة ومساجد يذكر فيها اسم الله كثيرا ولينصرن الله من ينصره ان الله لقوي العزيز (الحج ٣٠ . ٣٩)

Permission is granted to those who fight because they have been wronged. And Allah is able to give them victory. Because they have been expelled from their homes unjustly for, they said Allah is our Lord. Had Allah not repulsed some people by the other people, churches, places of worship and the mosques, where Allah's name is recited profusely, would have been destroyed. Allah helps one who helps Him. Verily Allah is All Strong, All Mighty. (Al Hajj 39-40)

(١) ثم ان ربك للذين هاجروا من بعد ما فتنوا ثم جاهدوا فاصبروا ان الله من بعد ها لغفور الرحيم

And thy Lord for those, who had to flee after they had been persecuted, then they strived and were steadfast, for them

Once he sent a contingent under the command of Khaild bin Al-Wahid. Khalid killed some of the tribals even after they had surrendered. When it was reported to Allah's Messenger (PBUH) he raised his hands in utter distress, towards the sky and said, "O, Allah, I am free from what Khalid has done. (Bukhari)

While bidding farewell to the soldiers on an expedition he would direct the commander that before launching the offensive, he must call the enemy to embrace Islam or agree to sign a peace treaty and pay tribute to the Islamic state. The attack should be carried out only when all these conditions are rejected by the

thy Lord, is Forgiving and Merciful.

(j) افضل الجهاد كلمة الحق عند سلطان جائر (الحديث)

Upholding the Truth in the face of a tyrant ruler is the supreme *Jihad*.

(A) Prince Sikander Lodhi was the governor of a region. He received report that the Hindus were converging at Krukchhetra, taking bath in the tank and praying at the old temple and tumultuous festivities were going on. The prince wanted to punish the revellers. He sought *Fatwa* from the chief theologian of his court Malikul ulema Abdullah. He said that a place of worship of non-Muslims cannot be destroyed nor they could be punished for performing their religious rites. The prince was furious and threatened to kill the theologian for supporting the non-believers. The theologian boldly said that life and death were in the hands of Allah. One who declares the truth should be prepared to sacrifice his life for it. What he had opined was in accordance with the Islamic Shariah. If the prince had no regard for the Divine command why did he seek his *Fatwa*. His boldness impressed the prince and he desisted from taking any action against the pilgrims.

(Aab-e-Kausar, p 455-56)

enemy (1).

Abu Bakr Siddiq, the first enlightened Caliph of Islam, while dispatching an army, invariably exhorted them:

1. Not to kill women, children and elderly people.
2. Not to disturb monks, priests and those taking refuge in a place of worship.
3. Not to cut the trees laden with fruits.
4. Not to burn standing crops.
5. Not to kill animal except for consuming.
6. Not to depopulate inhabited areas.
7. Not to misappropriate the spoils of war.
8. Never commit breach of faith.
9. Never flee the battlefields.
10. Those who surrendered, their lives and properties will be protected like those of the Muslims.

This is Islamic code of conduct during a war. But at the same time Islam does not have any regard or consideration for personal relationship or bond of friendship. Once the battle lines are drawn and the believers have taken up arms to uphold the Truth, all emotional and worldly connections and contacts are severed.

Once Abu Bakr's son told him that during a battle (when he had not yet embraced Islam and was fighting the Muslims) he (Abu Bakr) was right at his point but he did not aim his arrow at him, as he did not like to kill his

(1) These conditions were based on temporal (political) as well as spiritual considerations. Unlike Jesus Christ who lived as a subject of a ruler (Roman) Allah's Messenger (PBUH) was himself the ruler of an independent state (Madinah). As Allah's Messenger (PBUH), dissemination of the Divine message was his foremost duty. As a ruler he had to lead military expeditions or to dispatch an army for a pre-emptive action against an

father. Abu Bakr said, "Son, if you had come close to my sword I would not have thought for a moment that you were my son and had killed you" (1).

The same spirit was manifest when after the battle of Badr in which a large number of pagans of Makkah were taken prisoner of war. The question of their fate

enemy. The pagans of Makkah, the Jews of Khyber, the hypocrites of Madinah, Christians of Syria (Rum) and a host of mighty hostile tribes were always lying in ambush to strike against the Muslims. So while dispatching his army he would invariably put his divine mission on priority and call the enemy to Islam. In case they embraced Islam, they would become part of the Muslim Ulemah. If they rejected the divine message, as a ruler he was supposed to take some strategical steps to defend the Muslim state. To ensure that the enemy will not move in hostility, peace treaty or an agreement to pay tribute (*Jizyah*) was to be executed. Such an agreement would guarantee peace on the borders of the Islamic state. So while judging the Islamic expeditions, these two points must be kept in mind. Similarly the Quranic verses relating to *Jihad* and *Qital* should not be seen out of the context and perspective. Most of these verses were revealed as a sequel of repression and persecution by the pagans of Makkah. Allah first exhorted the Muslims to bear it with forbearance and steadfastness. When the pagans did not relent Allah's Messenger (PBUH) along with his followers, emigrated to Madinah to save the Muslim from persecution. But the pagan launched an attack on Madinah (battle of Badr), the Muslims were therefore, finally allowed to resist, retaliate and repulse the aggression.

(1) The same spirit of Jihad, we find in the Maha Bharata battle. Arjuna, the chief warrior of the Pandavas, on seeing his cousins, teachers and other relatives lined up in the battlefield to fight him, was filled with compassion and refused to kill his own kins. He said it was better to live on begging than to live in luxury after killing ones own relatives. Sri Krishna, his charioteer and spiritual guide exhorted him not to have any

was being deliberated. Some suggested that they may be released on payment of ransom. But Umar bin Alkhatab vehemently opposed their release and suggested that all of them be put to the sword. He even suggested that the emigrants (who were the relatives of the pagans) should kill their own kith and kins among the prisoners.

(Umar's suggestion was based on the apprehension

regard for worldly relations, and fight against injustice and oppression.

Then the son of Kunti saw stationed
Fathers and grand sires
Teachers, Uncles and Comrades too
Filled with Utmost Compassion
Despondent spoke these words
Seeing my kins folk Krishna
That have drawn here to fight
My limbs sink down
And my mouth becomes parched
And there is trembling in my body
(The bow) Govinda, falls from my hand
And my skin too, is burning
And I cannot stand still
And my mind seems to wander
And I see portents
That are adverse Kesva
And I see no welfare
Having slain my kins in battle
I wish no victory Kesva
Nor kingdom, nor joy
Of what use to us were kingdom, Govinda
Of what use enjoyment of life
For whose sake, we desire
Kingdom, enjoyment and happiness
They are drawn up here in battle
Giving up life and wealth.
For not slaying my revered elders of great dignity
It would be better to eat alms food even in this world.

that if the pagans were released they will again launch an attack to avenge the defeat at Badr. His apprehension

But having slain my elders who seek their evil right in this world.

I shall eat food smeared with blood.

The Blessed one said:

Thou hast mourned who should not be mourned

And (yet) thou speakest words of wisdom

Dead and living men, the truly learned don't mourn

For to one that is born, death is certain

And birth is certain for one that has died.

Therefore the things avoidable

Thou should not mourn

Presented by mere luck

An open door of heaven

Happy the warrior, son of Pirtha

That gets such a fight

Now if thou this duty required

Conflict; will not perform

Then thy own duty and glory

Abandoning, thou shall get thee evil

Disgrace too, will creature

Speak of thee, without end

And for one that has been esteemed disgrace is worst than death.

Either slain thou shall gain heaven

Or conquering thou shall enjoy the earth.

Therefore, son of Kunti

Unto battle making a firm resolve

Holding pleasure and pain alike

Gain and loss, victory and defeat

Then gird thyself for battle

Thus thou shall not gain evil.

(Bhagwad Gita, translated by Franklin Edgerton,
Professor of Sanskrit and Comparative Philosophy,
Yale University, England.)

proved to be true. The released pagans launched a retaliatory offensive and inflicted a stunning defeat upon the Muslims in the battle of Uhud.)

The Quran while enjoining upon the believers to perform *Jihad* and *Qital* at the same time lays great emphasis upon peace and truce. If the enemy is inclined to

Here we find marked proximity between the approaches of the two scriptures on this point. The Quran exhorts the believers to strive in the cause of Allah. He will forgive their sins and admit them into paradise.

يا ايها الذين آمنوا هل ادلكم على تجارة تنجيكم من عذاب
اليم تومنون بالله ورسوله وتجاهدون في سبيل الله
باموالكم وانفسكم ذالكم خير لكم ان كنتم تعلمون
يغفر لكم ذنوبكم ويدخلكم جنات تجري من تحتها الانهار
ومساكن طيبة في جنت عدن ذالك الفوز العظيم (صف ١٢-١٠)

O, ye believers, shall I guide you to a trade that will save you from a painful torment. Believe in Allah and His Messenger (PBUH) and strive in the cause of Allah with your wealth and lives that will be better for you if you but know. He will forgive your sins and admit you in the gardens under which rivers flow and pleasant dwelling in Paradise. That is indeed the great success (61: 10-12)

The Gita also preaches on the same lines:

Either slain thou shall gain heaven
or conquering thou shalt gain enjoy the earth
Therefore son of *Kunti*
unto battle making a firm resolve
...Holding pleasure and pain alike
Gain and loss victory and defeat
Then gird thyself for battle.

Mahabharata and the Battle of Badr

The Mahabharata and the battle of Badr have some very striking similarities. Both were fought between the cousins. Just as Coravas and Pandavas were the cousins, the pagans of

negotiate a truce, the Muslims must respond positively and let the peace prevail. Be prepared to challenge the enemy but always be willing to declare truce if the enemy so desires (1).

Makkah and the emigrants of Madinah were also the cousins and close relatives. Just as the Coravas had forcibly exiled the Pandavas to the forest, the pagans of Makkah had forced their cousins (who had embraced Islam) to flee Makkah. Just as the Pandavas were guided by the greatest exponent of Hindu religious philosophy, the Muslims in the battle of Badr were led by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) just as the mighty Coravas were defeated by a smaller group of Pandavas, the formidable pagan army of Makkah suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the oppressed and persecuted people determined to repulse the aggressive forces of evil.

Like Arjuna who was unwilling to fight his near and dear ones, Utha bin Rabia a sane among the fanatics, was opposed to the idea of fighting the Muslims. At the meeting convened to evolve the strategy of the offensive, he opined that "we will not be performing a heroic deed by killing Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions. If they were slain we will not be happy to see them killed and if we were defeated we would be extremely distressed at the humiliation". But his sane advice was ignored and pagans attacked Madinah. On seeing Utha bin Rabia at the battlefield, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) had remarked that he was the one amongst the pagans who had been endowed with wisdom and insight.

However the cousins fought a fierce battle. Umar bin Al-Khattab killed his maternal uncle. When Abdul Rahman threw a challenge his father Abu Bakr came forward to fight him but Allah's Messenger (PBUH) called him back. Abu Obaidah bin Jarrah was attacked by his father and was killed by his son he wanted to slay.

(1) واعدولهم من استطعتم من قوه من

رباط الخيل ترهبون به عد والله وعد وكم

The Hudaibyah treaty bears testimony to the fact that Islam attaches paramount importance to peace even agreeing to humiliating conditions. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) had set out for Makkah to perform Umrah (partial Hajj) accompanied by his 1400 companions. The pagans of Makkah refused entry to the Muslims. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) had no plans to fight but the behaviour of the pagans was provocative. Denying an opportunity to the pilgrims to visit the Kaba, was a violation of the centuries old traditions of peaceful pilgrimage. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) with a formidable force of 1400 pilgrims could have forced his way to the sanctuary (the Kaba) but he opted for an amicable solution. The pagans put forth humiliating terms for the peace treaty. The Muslims were not allowed to perform the pilgrimage that year and were asked to come next year for the purpose. They even did not agree to the words, 'the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) to be suffixed to his name in the text of treaty'. The Muslims were exasperated but the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) conceded all the conditions and returned to Madinah without performing Umrah.

And make ready all that is required (for defence) including the steeds of war, so as to scare away the enemy of Allah and your enemy.

وَأَنْ جَنَحُوا لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَاجْتَنِبْهُمْ لَا تُؤَاوِئِهِمْ
عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ (٨ - ٦١)

But if they (the enemy) are desirous of peace respond positively and put your trust in Allah. He is All Hearer All Knower (8:61)

وَأَنْ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ
اللَّهِ ثُمَّ ابْلُغْ مَا مَنَعَهُ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (توبه. ٦)

If anyone of the polytheists seeks your protection, grant his request, so that he may listen the Quran. Then escort him to his camp (haven). This is because they are the people who know not.

(9: 6)

However, when the pagans themselves violated the treaty, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) did not hesitate to march on Makkah to punish the transgressors. The holy city fell to the believers. The Muslim warriors entered the town in a triumphant match. The pagans were apprehensive of a harsh reckoning by Muhammad (PBUH) whom they had persecuted, whose innocent and helpless companions were tortured and killed by them and had been forced to flee the town. One of the commanders of the Muslim army cried out in a fit of victory "This is the day of blood shed. The sanctity of the holy Kaba will not be observed today". The hysterical cry frightened the pagans. When it was reported to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) he replaced the zealot commander forthwith and declared general amnesty, saying:

Those who lay down their arms will be safe

Those who shut down their doors (confined themselves to their houses) will be safe.

Those who take refuge in Abu Sufyun's house would be safe.

The pagans surrendered. All were the deadliest enemies of the Muslims. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) who has been referred to in the Quran as Rahmatul lil Alamin (رحمته للعالمين) (Blessing for all) pardoned them declaring, "There is no blame on you, you are free to go to your homes". This is the Islamic *Jihad*. Compassion and forgiveness are its main traits.

Islam does not permit persecution or forced conversion. The Quran has declared in an unequivocal term, "There is no coercion (in the matter of) religion (لا إكراه في الدين)". The Quranic way of preaching is, "Call towards the path of Allah with reason and through decent preaching and argue with them politely".

ادع الى سبيل ربك بالحكمة والموعظة
الحسنة وجادلهم بالتى هي احسن

There is no compulsion on anyone to embrace Islam, nor Allah's Messenger (PBUH) was charged with a mandatory duty of converting people to his religion. He was eager to see that the members of his family particularly his uncle Abu Talib who was his guardian and had brought him up, should embrace Islam. But Allah Almighty cautioned him not to be impatient, "You cannot guide the one you love, but it is Allah who guides anyone He wills.

انك لا تهدي من احببت ولكن الله يهدي من يشاء (قصص - ٥٦)

Allah also made it clear that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) had only to convey (the message of Allah)

وما على الرسول الا البلغ (المائدة - ٩٩)

These Quranic verses make it amply clear that Islam does not favour coercion in the matter of religion. There is no room for forcible conversion in Islam, nor Allah's Messenger (PBUH) had any obligations except conveying Allah's message to the people.

The Quran has given a free hand to all either to accept the Divine message or disbelieve it.

قل الحق من ربكم فمن شاء فليؤمن ومن شاء فليكفر (كهف - ٢٩)

[Say, (O, Muhammad) the Truth (Islam) is from your Lord. Now whosoever likes he may believe it and who ever likes, he may disbelieve it.]

The Quran again declared

انا هدینہ السبیل اما شکراً واما کفورا (الدھر)

We have guided him to the (right) path (now it is up to men) either to be grateful (and believe) or ungrateful (and disbelieve).

(However the Quran warns the disbelievers of severe punishment and torment in the here after.)

This tolerance and liberal approach was manifest in all the peace treaties the Muslims signed with the non-Muslims.

A charter of peace was granted to the Christians of Najran (Arabia) by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). The conditions enshrined in it guaranteed that the priests and office bearers of the Church will not be dismissed from their office nor the cross and the images will be removed.

In a convent signed by Abu Bakr with the inhabitants of Hera, it was stipulated that their churches will not be demolished and they will be permitted to display the cross during the festivals.

The charter given by Umar bin Al-Khattab to the Christians of Palestine reads:

Peace is granted to all of them, to their churches and other places of worship. It is guaranteed that the Muslims will not be allowed to occupy their churches, nor any structural change will be made.

No harm will be caused to the cross and other insignia, nor they will be persecuted.

لا يكرهون دينهم ولا يضار احد منهم

In the peace charter granted by Umar bin Al-Khattab to the Christians of Syria identical conditions as noted above, were stipulated and it concluded with the words.

It has been guaranteed to them by Allah and His Messenger (PBUH). They will be treated with compassion and peace so long as they abide by the terms and the

conditions of the treaty. A deputation of the Christians from Najran came to the Messenger (PBUH) to negotiate a treaty. When their time for prayer approached they wanted to go out of the mosque (where meeting was held) to offer the prayer, but Allah's Messenger (PBUH) permitted them to offer their prayer in the mosque.

When Umar bin Al-Khattab the second enlightened Caliph of Islam, visited Jerusalem to grant a peace charter to the people of Palestine, after the Muslims had conquered the country, he was negotiating the treaty at the grand church, when the scheduled time for the evening prayer approached, Umar rose to go out of the church to offer the prayer. The patriarch requested him to offer prayer in the church premises. But Umar declined the offer, lest the Muslims might claim to convert the church into a mosque on the ground that their Caliph had offered prayer in it. So he went out of the church and offered the prayer at some distance from the church. True to his apprehension, the Muslims raised a mosque where he had offered the prayer.

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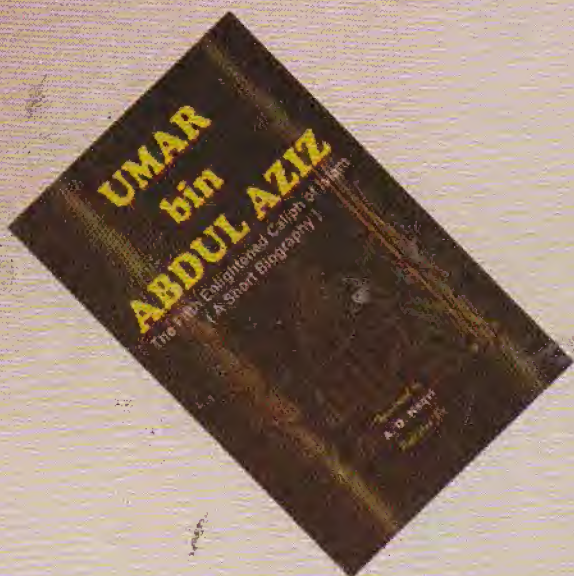
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